GERMAN HELMETS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Branislav Radovic

2

- Paratroop
- Covers
- Liners
- Makers
- Insignia
- Etc.

A SCHIFFER MILITARY HISTORY BOOK

GERMAN HELMETS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Branislav Radovic

This two volume set is a fully illustrated, detailed look at the famous German "stahlhelm" of World War II. Full color photographs – including multiple-view, interiors, and up-close detail – show Army, Luftwaffe, Kriegsmarine, Waffen-SS, Paratroop, and many others.

There have been several noteworthy reference books on German helmets over the past few years, but *German Helmets of the Second World War* gives the collector the unique opportunity to study the many examples portrayed at close quarters.

Presented for the first time are images of the highest quality and definition – details of model types, liners, insignia, camouflage paint schemes, covers and accoutrements – all in full colour. To help put these helmets into a historic context, there are also many original, unpublished black and white photographs.

Both volumes have been specifically produced to give the advanced collector the opportunity to expand his or her knowledge, and to compare paint and insignia against their own collections. For the novice or would-be collector, these books are an invaluable reference.

Covered in the two volumes are:

Vol. 1: M1916/18, M1932, M1935, M1940, M1942, M1942/45.

Vol. 2: Paratroop, covers, goggles, aircrew, liner systems, manufacturer's marks, insignia, lightweight, relic, and a selection of period photographs.

GERMAN HELMETS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

By Branislav Radovic

HELMETS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR *(with Michael Haselgrove)*

GERMAN HELMETS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR: Vol. 1

GERMAN HELMETS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR: Vol. 2

GERMAN HELMETS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Branislav Radovic

Schiffer Military History
Atglen, PA

CONTENTS

Paratroop 7

Covers 67

Goggles 117

Misc. 121

Aircrew Helmets 133

Liner Systems 143

Manufacturer's Marks 159

Owner-Named 163

Insignia 167

Lightweight 189

Relic 215

Battle-Damaged 227

Souvenired 241

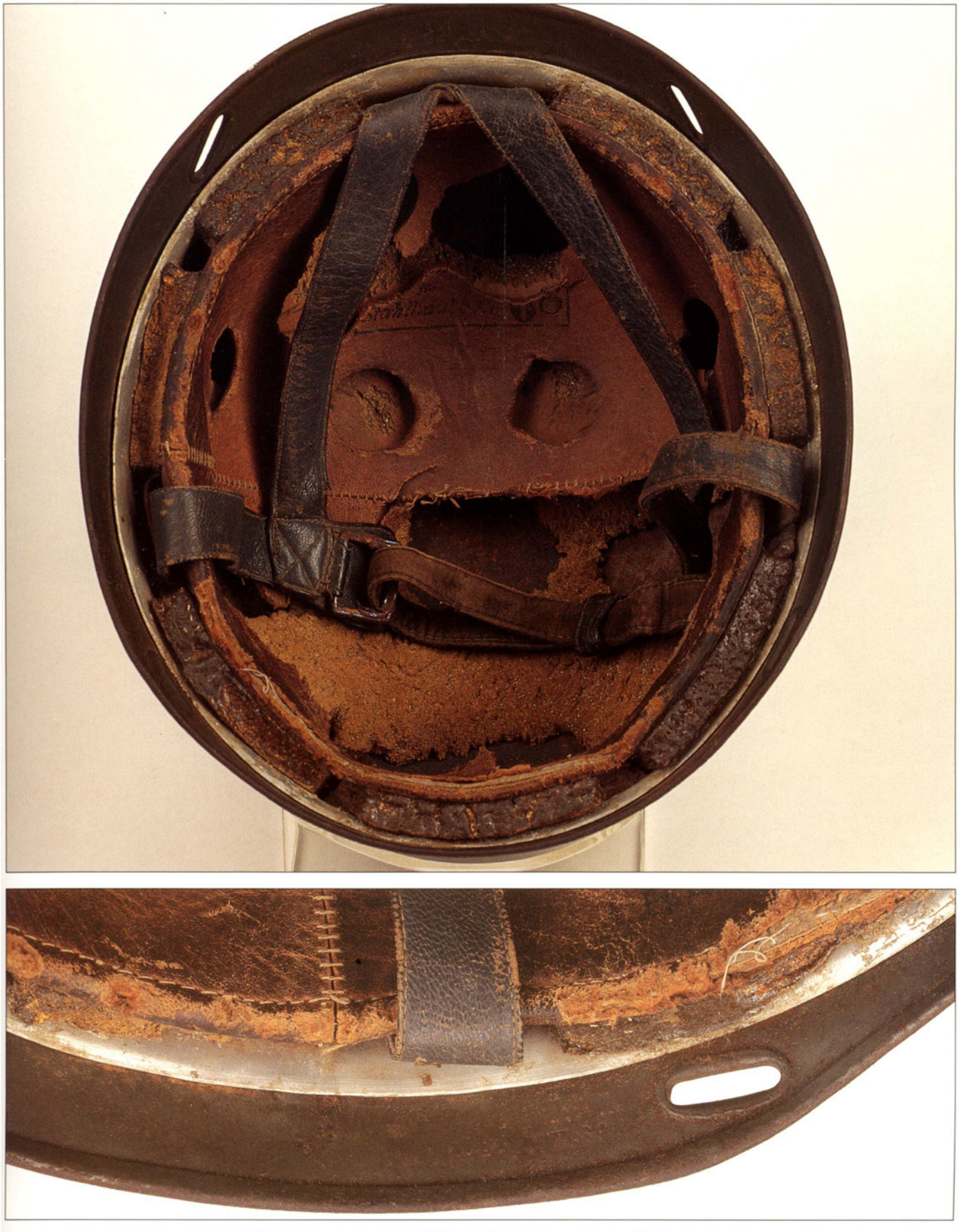
Period Photos 263

In Art 297

PARATROOP

■ M36 paratroop helmet shell with M38 liner and chinstrap. This helmet is painted smooth olive green and carries the twin insignia of the Luftwaffe: the early pattern 'droop tail' eagle transfer on the left side and the national tri-colour on the right. The photographs show the holes where the original liner would have been attached. This helmet has been modified to carry the later M38 paratroop liner and shows the new method of attachment by vented nuts and bolts with two extra holes for adjustment with a special tool. Also shown is the early style chinstrap with sliding buckle. (Collection of Bill Shea - The Ruptured Duck)

■ Front view.
■ Back view.



■ The remains of the M38 liner and detail of the rim and manufacturer's stamp 'ET'.

M36 variant paratroop helmet shell. This helmet is painted a smooth olive green and carries no insignia, probably removed during the war. Again, the holes for the early liner can be seen. (Collection of Malcolm Fisher - Regimentals)

■ Front and back views, with detail of the rim which clearly shows the manufacturing process of first rolling the rim and then punching the holes.

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell, with the early pattern M38 liner and chinstrap with the sliding buckle. This helmet is painted smooth apple green and carries the remains of the late pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer on the left side and the national tri-colour shield transfer on the right. It has been damaged by a bullet through the front which passed diagonally across the forehead before hitting the liner ventilation bolts and exiting at the eagle transfer. It is unlikely the wearer suffered more than a graze to his forehead, and a bad headache. Presumably, this happened very early in the war as the helmet is otherwise virtually unused.

Side views

■ Pre-war M38 liner showing yellow foam padding and a detail shot showing the shell manufacturer's mark, 'ET'. Notice the typical pre-war lettering, in serif italics, of the ink-stamped sizes of the liner and shell, 59 and 71 respectively.

M38 paratroop helmet shell, with the early pattern M38 liner and the chinstrap with the sliding friction gate buckle. This helmet is painted smooth apple green and carries the late pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer on the left side and the national tri-colour shield transfer on the right. (Collection of Steve Pledger)

■ Pre-war M38 liner showing yellow foam padding and a detail shot showing the shell manufacturer's mark, 'ET'. .The foam padding from the top of the crown is missing.

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell with M38-style liner and the chinstrap with the sliding friction gate buckle. This helmet is painted matte field grey and carries the late pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer on the left side.

Side views

■ M38-style liner. In this later configuration, black foam replaced yellow, and sans serif typeface was used for the ink-stamped liner and shell sizing.

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell with M38-style liner and the chinstrap with the sliding friction gate buckle. This helmet is painted matte field grey, worn smooth with wear, and carries the late pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer on the left side. (Collection of Steve Pledger)

■ M38-style mid-war liner.

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell with M38-style liner and the chinstrap with the sliding friction gate buckle. This helmet is painted matte field grey and carries the late pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer on the left side. It has the late-war version of the nut and bolt for liner attachment. Unlike its predecessor which was made of steel and vented, this one is made of aluminium without vents and has a screwdriver slot for adjustment. (Collection of Steve Pledger)

Side views

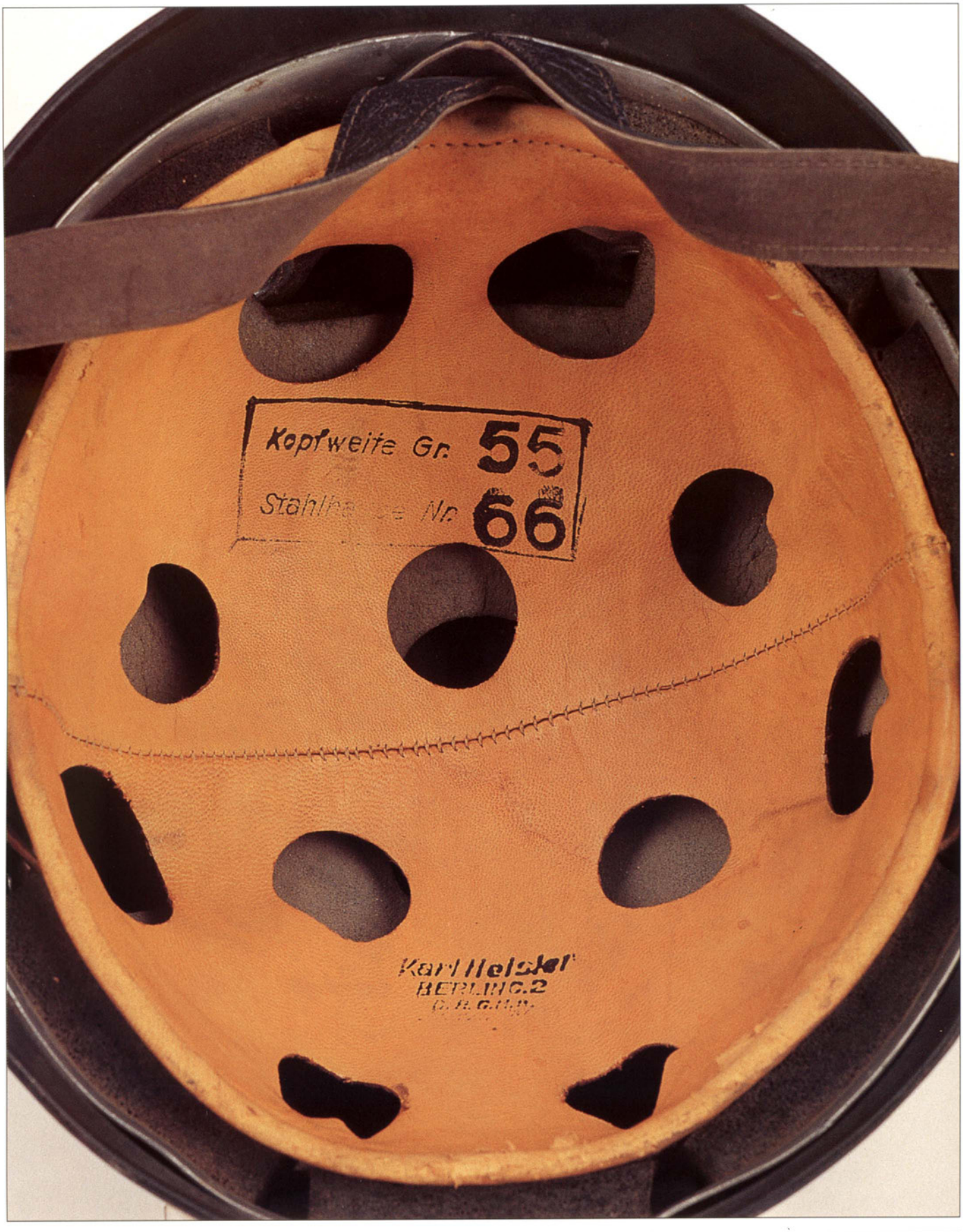
■ M38 paratroop helmet shell with M38-style liner and the chinstrap with the sliding friction gate buckle. This helmet is painted matte field grey and carries the late pattern Luftwaffe subdued eagle transfer on the left side. It also carries the late-war aluminium slotted nuts and bolts for liner attachment. (Collection of Brian Maederer - Military Collectibles)

Side views

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell with M38-style liner and the chinstrap with the sliding friction gate buckle. This helmet is painted matte field grey and carries no insignia. The nuts and bolts for liner attachment are the earlier vented steel type. This is a typical example of late-war configuration. (Collection of Steve Pledger)

Side views

■ M38-style mid- to late-war liner. (Collection of Steve Pledger)



■ M38-style mid- to late-war liner variation. (Collection of Steve Pledger)

■ M38-style mid- to late-war liner variation. (Collection of David Hucklebridge)

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell with M38-style liner and the chinstrap with the sliding friction gate buckle. This helmet is painted matte field grey, worn smooth with wear, and carries the earlier pattern SS runic shield transfer on the right side. As far as is known, paratroop helmets were not issued with this insignia. It is possible the transfer was applied at unit level or by a soldier in the field. There was only one SS Fallschirmjäger Battallion (500 later renumbered 600), but in the few existing photographs of these units, their helmets appear without insignia.

Detail of the early style M38 paratroop chinstrap with the sliding buckle.

■ Detail of the later style M38 paratroop chinstrap with the sliding friction gate buckle with snaps.

■ Detail of the late-war M38 paratroop chinstrap with sliding gripper friction buckle without snaps.

■ Details of typical shell manufacturers' markings on an early M38 helmet, 'ET' is marked on the inside left of the rim and on a late-war shell, 'CKL' is found on the inside rear of the rim.

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell. This much-used helmet was originally painted smooth apple green then overpainted in a base sand colour. It has the early vented liner nuts and bolts and carries the remains of the twin insignia transfers of the Luftwaffe with the later pattern eagle. (Collection Malcolm Fisher - Regimentals)

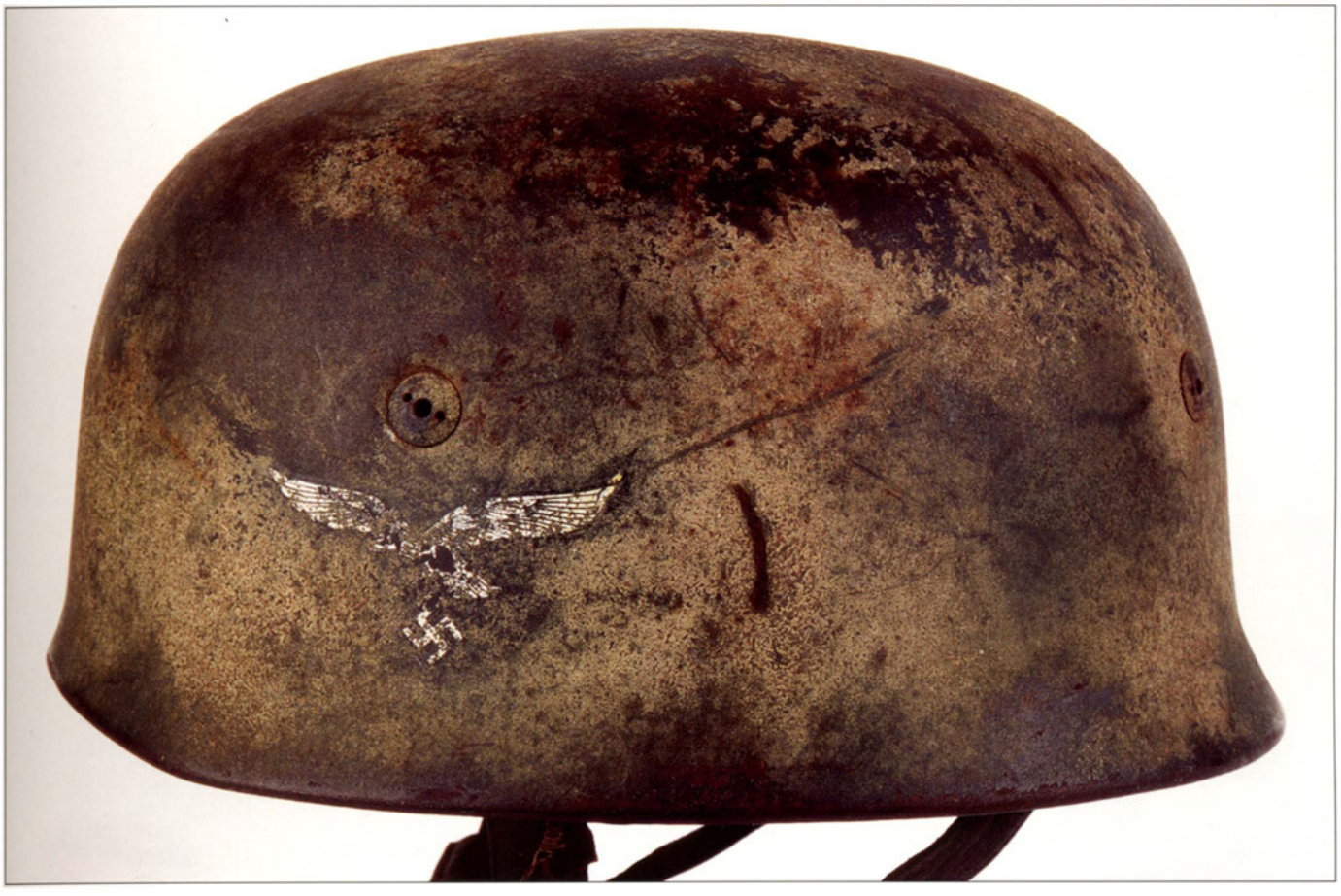
■ M38 paratroop helmet shell with M38-style liner. This helmet is covered in a zimmeritt-like textured paste and over sprayed with a base colour of sand with patches of brown and green. A space on the front has been left to accommodate a painted red cross on a white background. The liner nuts and bolts are the mid-war pattern, vented but with a spanner slot for adjustment.

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell with M38-style liner and the chinstrap with the sliding friction gate buckle. This helmet is painted matte field grey and has been overpainted with a base colour of sand with sprayed brown patches. A triangular patch has been left around the Luftwaffe transfer. (Collection of Bob Tredwen - Military Antiques)

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell with M38-style liner and the chinstrap with the sliding friction gate buckle. This helmet was originally painted matte field grey, then overpainted with a base colour of sand around the later pattern Luftwaffe insignia, then overpainted again in green. It was captured by a British soldier in Tunisia in 1943. (Collection of David Hucklebridge)

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell with M38-style liner and the chinstrap with the sliding friction gate buckle. This helmet was originally painted matte field grey and then thickly overpainted in a reddish brown. No insignia is visible. (Collection of Bill Shea - The Ruptured Duck)

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell with M38-style liner and the chinstrap with the sliding friction gate buckle. This helmet was originally painted matte field grey and then overpainted in textured sand colour. It carries the late pattern eagle transfer. (Collection of Bill Shea - The Ruptured Duck)



■ M38 paratroop helmet shell with M38-style liner and the chinstrap with the sliding friction gate buckle. This helmet was originally painted matte field grey and then overpainted in white then again in a sand colour. No insignia is visible. According to the feldpost number painted inside: L51948, It was worn by a man from 2 Komp. Fallschirmjäger Pionier Battalion 1 of the 1st Fallschirmjäger Division, serving in Italy.

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell with M38-style liner and the chinstrap with the sliding friction gate buckle. This helmet was originally painted matte field grey and carried the late pattern eagle transfer. It was later overpainted in a sand colour. (Collection of Brian Maederer - Military Collectibles)

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell with M38-style liner and the chinstrap with the sliding friction gate buckle. This helmet was originally painted matte field grey and then thickly overpainted with a zimmeritt-like paste and then with a sand colour. No insignia is visible.

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell with M38-style liner and the remains of its chinstrap. This helmet is painted matte field grey and carries the later pattern Luftwaffe transfer on the left side. It has been covered with a cage of looped wire, often depicted in photographs of Fallschirmjäger in Normandy . It has a shell splinter hole through the crown and is marked in pencil, 'June 1944' around the hole. (Collection of Greg Nevill)

M38 paratroop helmet with early pattern olive drab cloth cover attached by six clips.

■ M38 paratroop helmet with early cloth cover and tinted goggles. This combination can often be seen in photographs of the airborne invasion of Crete in 1941.

Side views

■ Top view of helmet cover showing cross strap over the crown and cloth band for the attachment of foliage.

■ Interior view showing how the cover was attached to the shell.

COVERS

■ Un-issued regulation splinter pattern 5-piece helmet cover with loops for foliage, secured with a drawstring of the same cotton fabric. It was reversible to white for winter. This cover was also produced without loops.

■ Regulation splinter pattern 5-piece cover with loops and drawstring. This cover is sitting on its original M40 Luftwaffe helmet with late pattern eagle transfer. (Collection of Greg Nevill)

■ Splinter pattern cloth cover with loops for foliage, secured by three sprung metal clips. This cover is reversible to white for winter. It resembles closely the 3-clip camouflage cover designed for the Waffen-SS.

■ The previous cover reversed to white.

■ Splinter pattern cloth cover with loops for foliage, secured by three metal clips on elastic. The clips are the same as those on one of the string netting covers shown in Volume 1. This cover is not reversible.

■ Splinter pattern 5-piece cloth cover with loops and drawstring, made in a rayon-like fabric rather than cotton. It is not reversible.

■ Un-issued grey 5-piece cloth cover with loops for foliage, secured by a drawstring of the same fabric. Identical in cut to the earlier splinter pattern type cover, it was reversible to white.

■ White 5-piece cloth cover, secured by a drawstring. It is not reversible.

■ White 5-piece cloth cover, secured by a drawstring. It is not reversible. The fabric is heavy gauge with a herringbone pattern.

■ White 4-piece hooded cloth cover, secured by drawstrings around the helmet and at the ends of the flaps. It has a muslin face veil rolled up inside the front visor. It is not reversible. This cover is very similar to the hood arrangement on some camouflage jackets and may simply have been cut off.

■ The cover with the face veil in place.

■ M35/40 helmet overpainted in white with a simple piece of cloth over the crown secured with wire. (Collection of Bill Shea - The Ruptured Duck)

■ Waffen-SS early pattern cloth cover (without loops for foliage), secured by 3 sprung metal clips. Reversible to autumn shades, these photographs show the spring/summer colours.

■ Reversed to the autumn colours.

■ Waffen-SS late pattern cloth cover with loops for foliage, showing the spring/summer colours and the number '2' to denote the camouflage pattern.

■ Reversed to the autumn colours.

■ Variation of the Waffen-SS late pattern cloth cover, showing the spring/summer colours. (Collection of Bill Shea - The Ruptured Duck)

■ Reversed to the autumn colours.

Another variation of the Waffen-SS late pattern cover with loops, showing the spring/summer colours. Instead of the usual aluminium clips, these are steel.

■ Reversed to the autumn colours.

■ M42 SS helmet with camouflaged face veil thrown back over the helmet. It was attached around the helmet by an elasticated band and secured with a flat metal hook and loop.

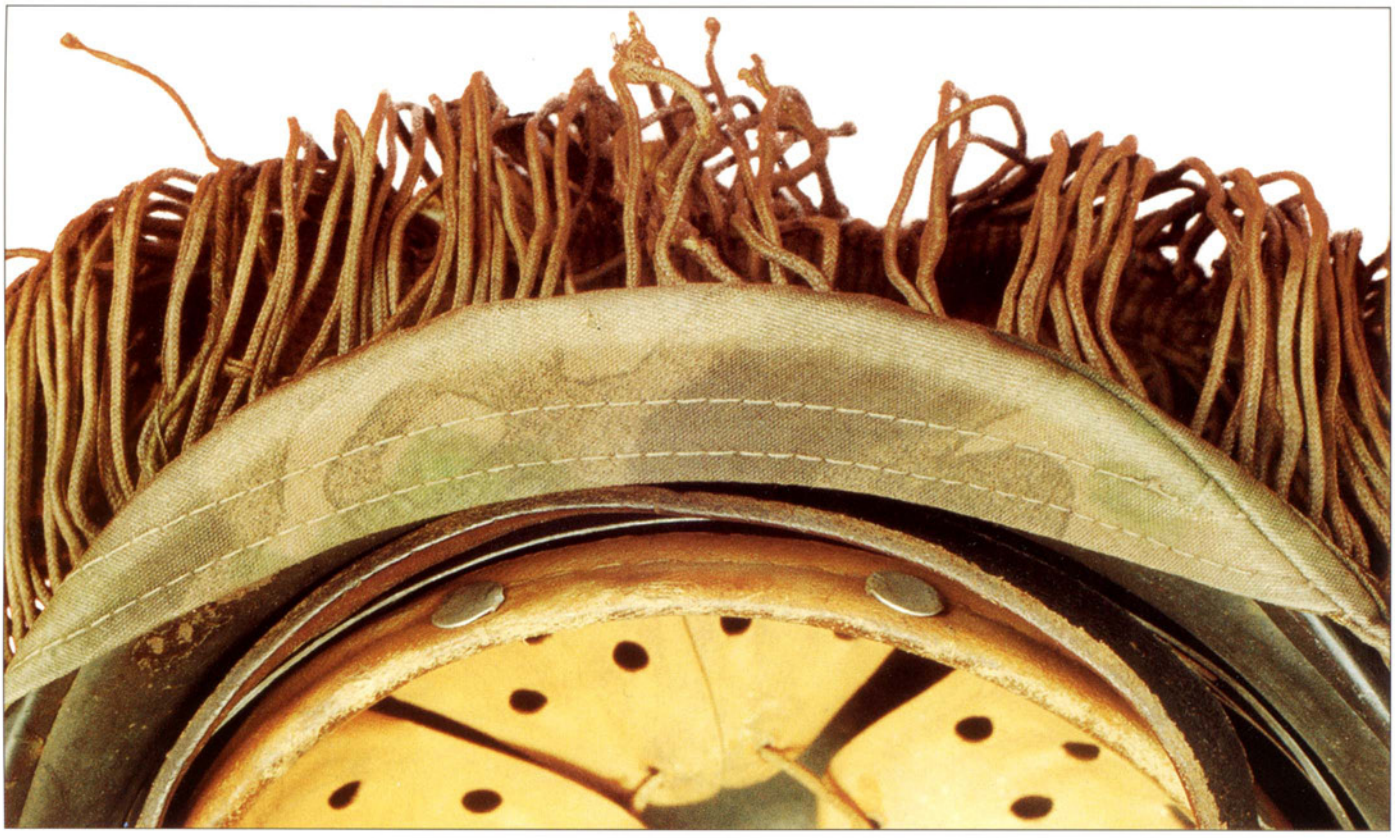
The face veil worn over the early pattern cloth cover.

■ Side views.

A US Army veteran's wife displays her husband's wartime trophies. On the table in front of her is an SS helmet with cover and face veil which is displayed on the following pages. (Collection of Brian Maederer - Military Collectibles)

■ The SS cover and face veil. (Collection of Brian Maederer - Military Collectibles)

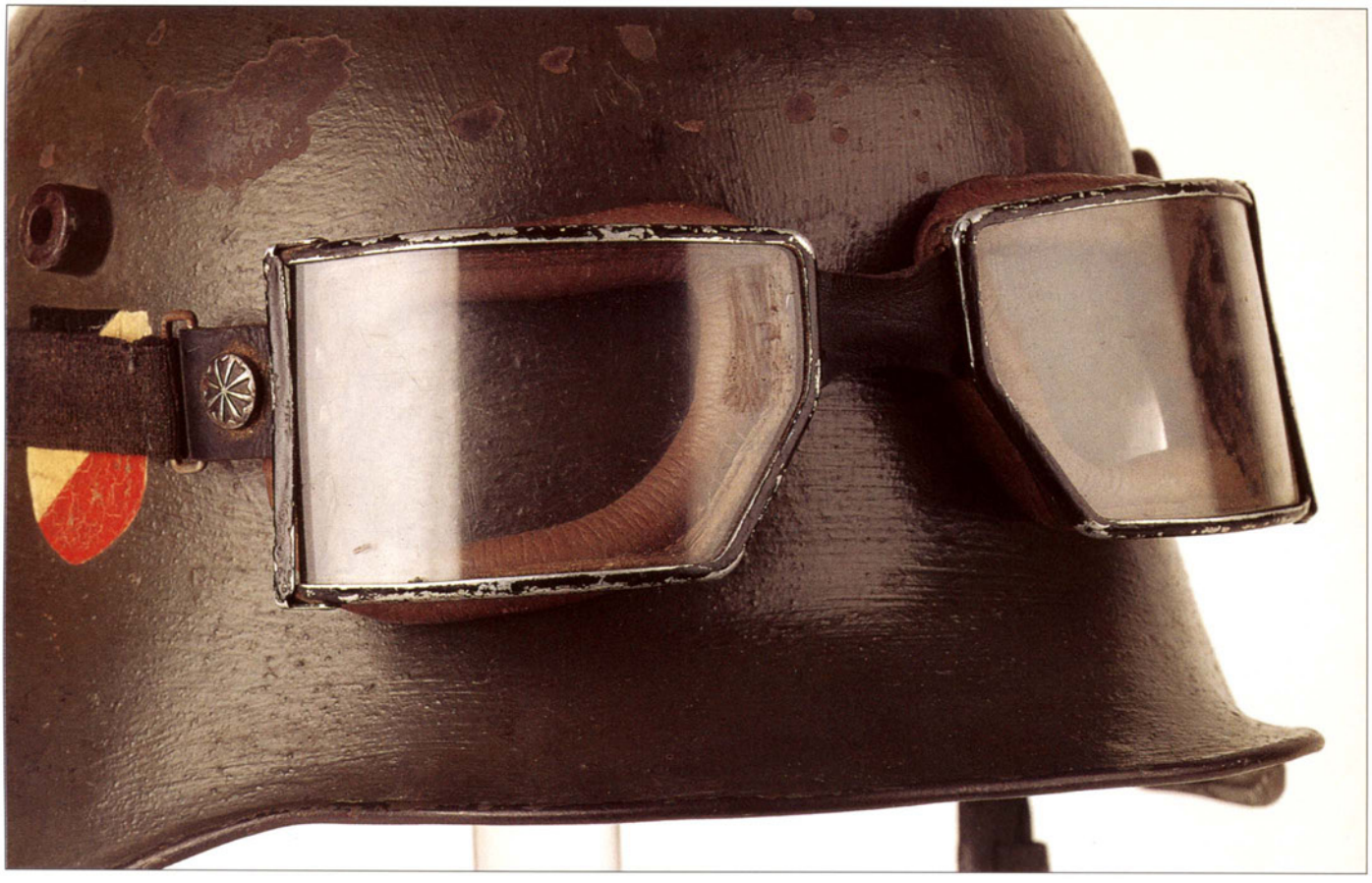
Interior shot showing how the cover is attached to the helmet.



■ Detail of the underside of the cover and face veil.

■ Detail of the aluminium sprung clips.

GOGGLES



A selection of dust and snow goggles, worn on helmets.

Neophan

MISC.

■ M40 beaded helmet commonly worn by civil defence and Luftschutz units. This example carries the Luftschutz transfer and, unusually, has been spray-camouflaged in sand, green and brown, presumably for use by Volksturm.

■ Berndorfer helmet made in Austria during WWI. It was originally painted brown and has been repainted in blue-grey with the addition of twin Feldpolizei/ Polizei transfers. (Collection of Malcolm Fisher - Regimentals)

■ Its original liner and chinstrap have been replaced with the M31 versions.

■ Italian M33 helmet, liner and chinstrap. Originally painted satin black, the shell has been overpainted with field grey and had the SS earlier pattern runic shield transfer applied on the left side. This helmet will have been worn by members of the Italian volunteers of the Waffen-SS Grenadier Regiment 29.

Side views.

■ M35 helmet shell with M31 liner and chinstrap. This helmet was supplied to Germany's Finnish allies. It was originally painted field grey and has been overpainted in green and bears the swastika and skull and bones insignia of Finnish stormtroopers. (Collection of Marcus Cotton)

■ Side views.

Front view.

AIRCREW HELMETS

■ M44 Fliegerstahlhelm, first used by aircrew during winter 1944-45. Designed with cut-outs around the ears to fit over the flight helmet, it gives some protection from anti-aircraft fire. The Y-shaped chinstrap, of plaited cord and leather, allowed for a secure fit around the earphones of the flight helmet. The helmet carries the later pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer on the front. There are other examples of various colours, presumably for unit identification, and some are known to carry squadron emblems. This example carries a feint drawing of a Dutch style clog from Zerstörergeschwader 26 (Horst Wessel) underneath the eagle. (Collection of Malcolm Fisher - Regimentals)

Front and rear views.

■ Interior view. Despite the poor condition of the leather liner, the remains of the maker's identification number, 'RB-Nr. 0/0250/0201', can be made out, as can the liner and shell size, both ink-stamped.

A rare Fliegerstahlhelm variant. This is an M40-style helmet with the cut-outs over the ears and with two embossed ventilation holes on each side instead of one. It was originally painted satin blue-grey and then repainted red around the later pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer on the front. The colour denotes the Staffel to which it belonged. The yellow clog insignia of II./Zerstörer Geschwader 26 'Horst Wessel', in transfer form, was then applied to both sides. The Fliegerstahlhelms seem to have been most commonly used by Zerstörer (destroyer) units, presumably because they were often exposed to fire from the ground as well as from the air. These units mainly used Me 110, 210 and 410 fighter bombers.

■ Front and rear views.

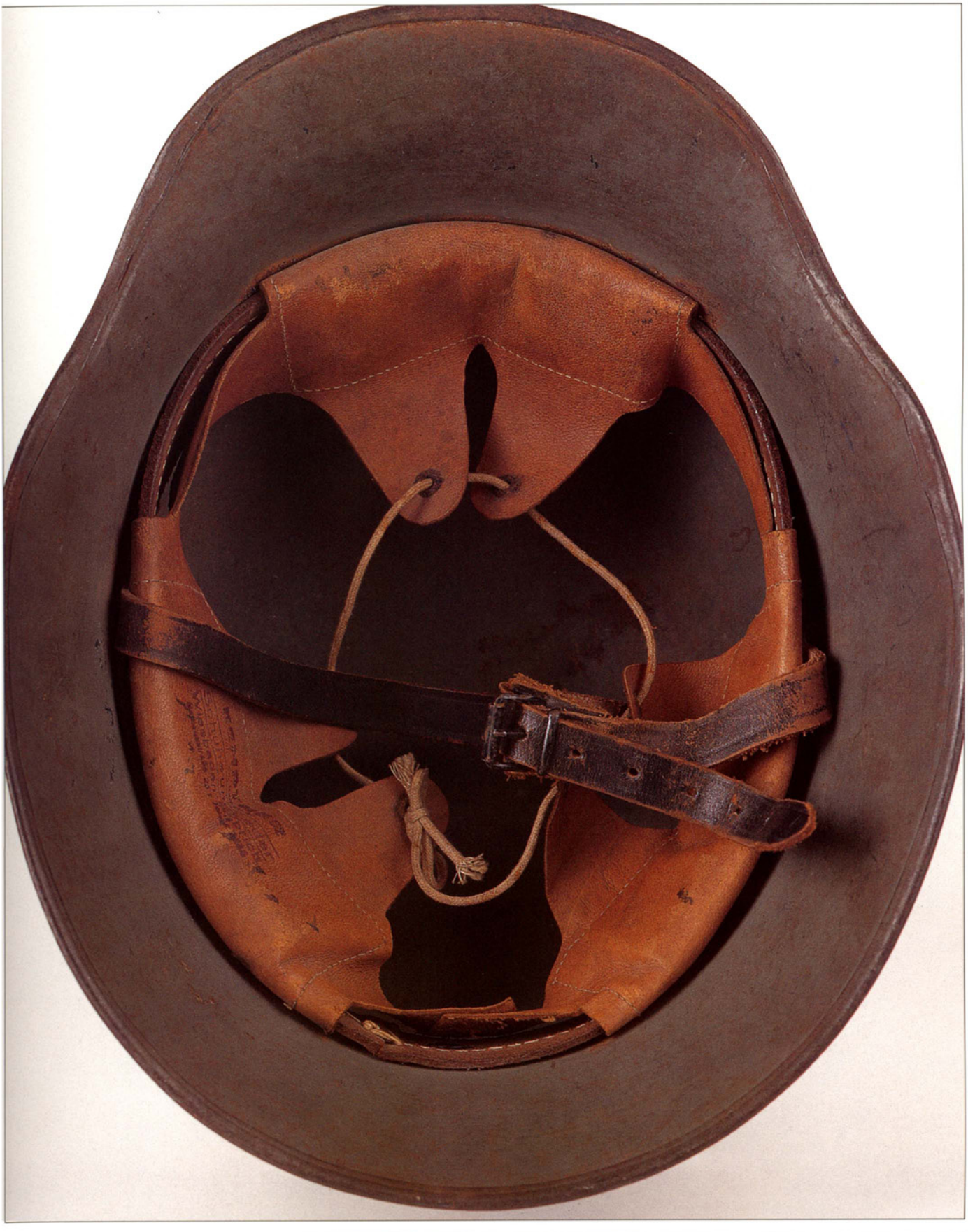
Interior view. The liner is a plain M31, made from leather with a pinkish tinge of the type often found in very late helmets. The chinstrap is the regular M31 style, late war quality. Other examples of this helmet exist, also with the M31 liner but with a paper-wadded crown for extra padding and with Y-shaped chinstraps which provide a better fit over the flight helmet. The only marks are '011' with '64' underneath, stamped on the inside of the neckguard

LINER SYSTEMS

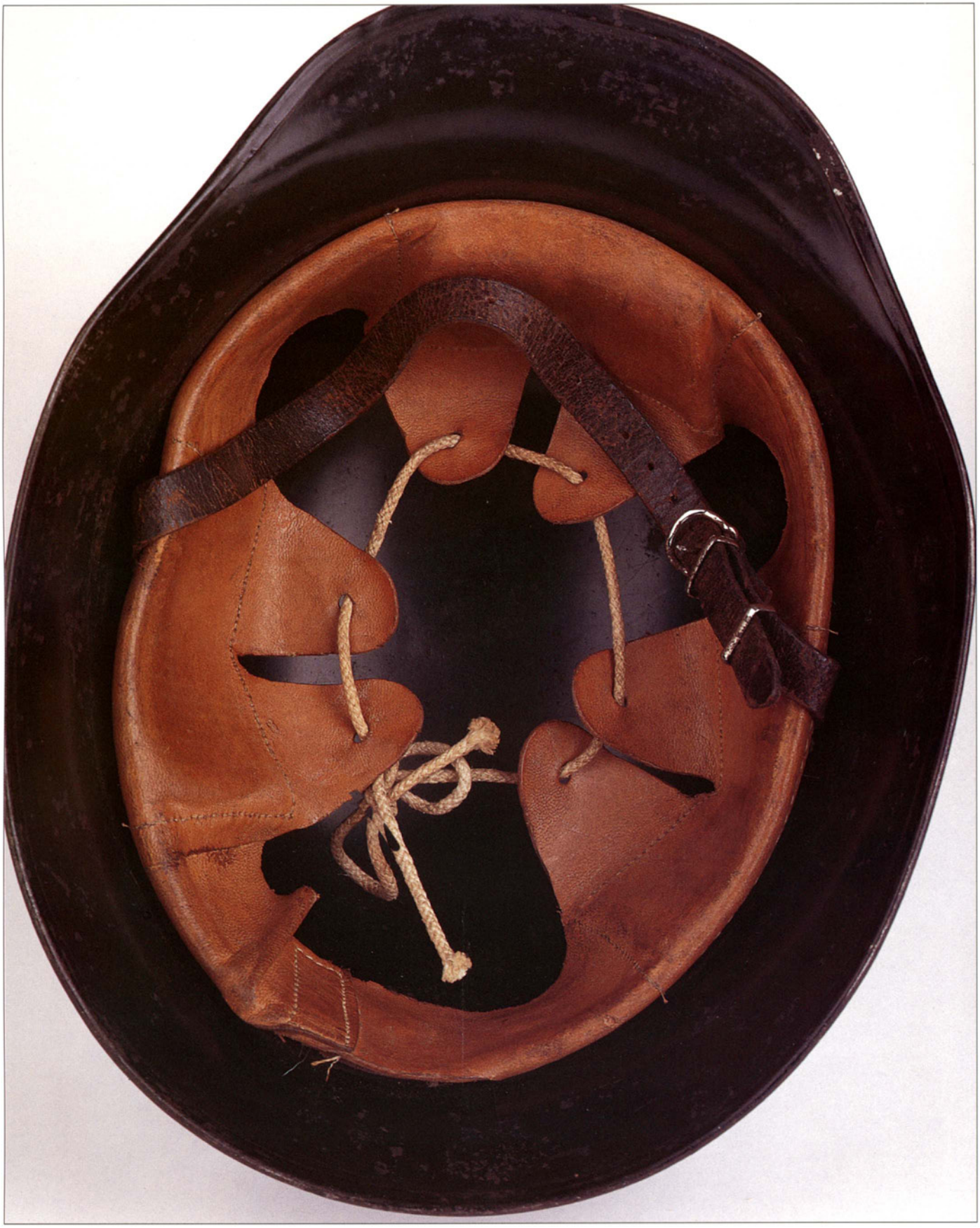
■ M16 liner in an M16 helmet shell.

■ M18 liner in an M18 helmet shell.

■ M27 liner in an M18 cut-out helmet shell.



■ M27 variant liner in an M18-style 'droop-nose' helmet shell.



■ M27 variant liner in an M18-style helmet shell.

■ M31 liner in an M16 helmet shell.

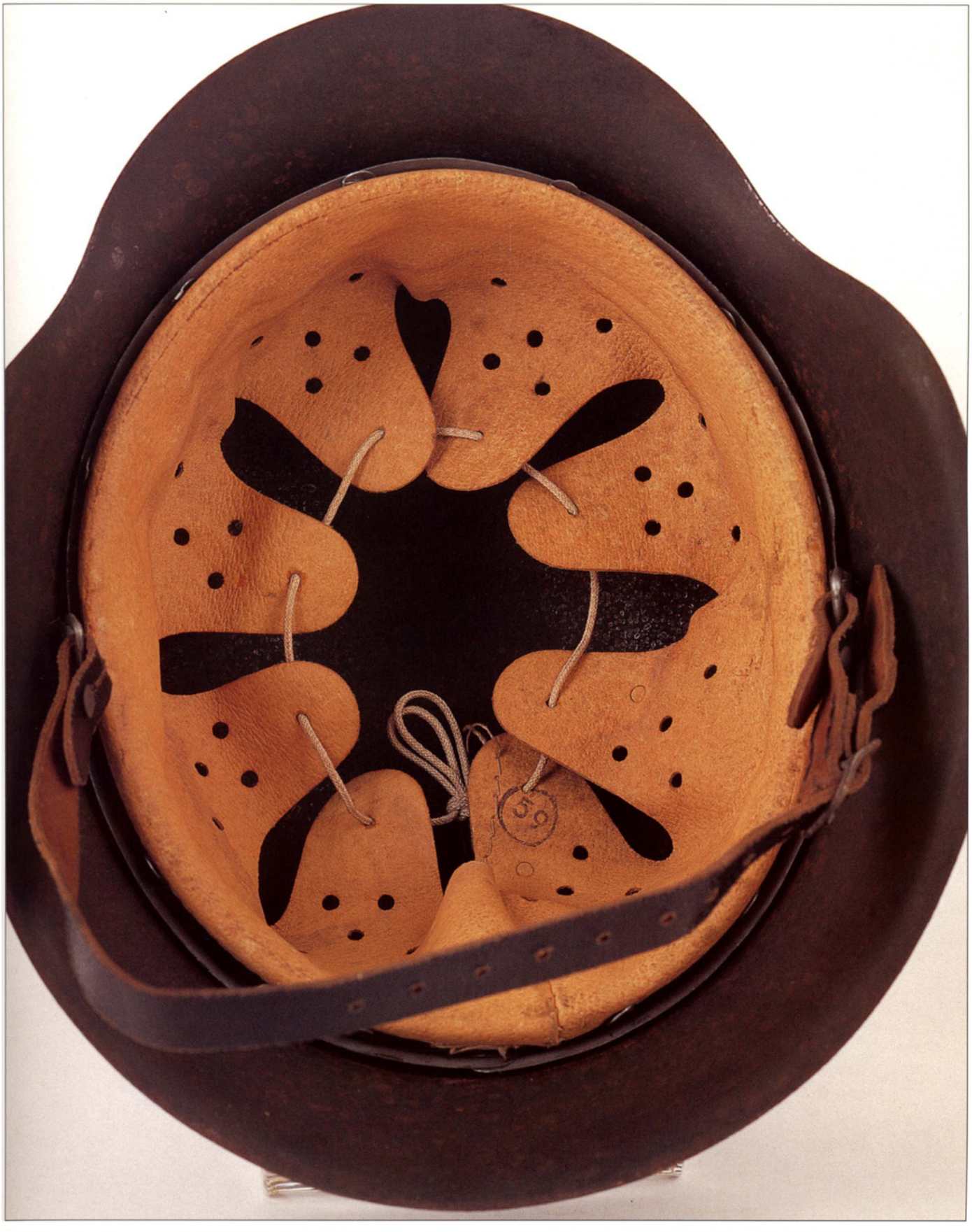
■ M31 liner in an M18 helmet shell.

■ M31 liner in an M35 helmet shell. Note the sharp, square chinstrap rings, often thought of as early style.

■ Another example of an M31 liner in an M35 helmet shell. Note the sharp, square chinstrap rings.

■ M31 liner in an M40 helmet shell. Note the rounded, square chinstrap rings.

■ Another example of an M31 liner in an M40 helmet shell.

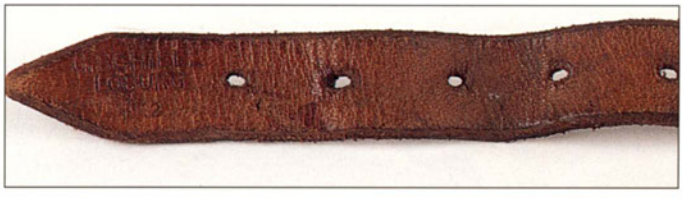


■ M31 liner in an M42 helmet shell. Note that some liner vent holes have not cut through the leather entirely.

■ Another example of an M31 liner in an M42 helmet shell.

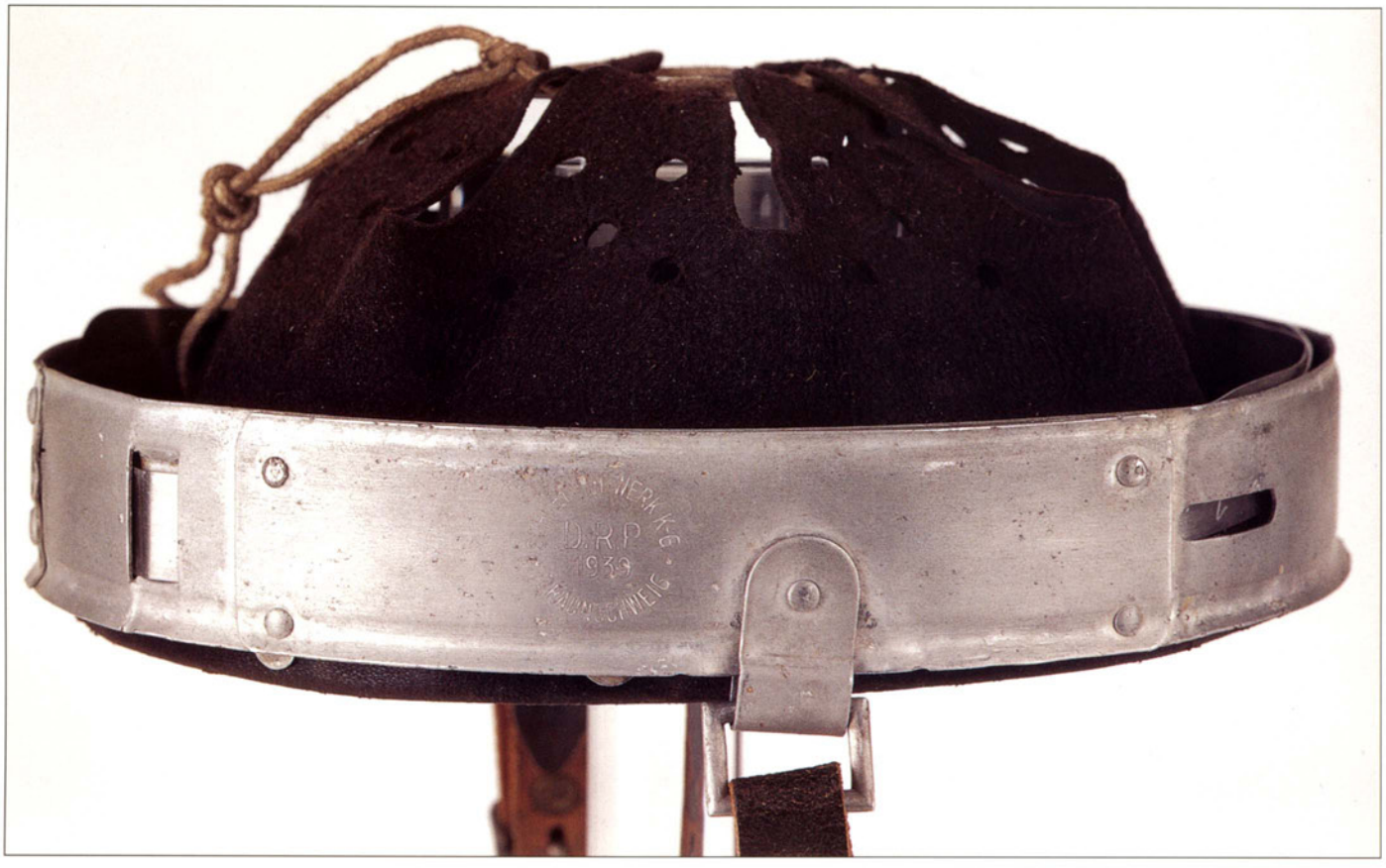
■ The M31 chinstrap, showing the full length with details of each end on both sides.

■ M31 chinstrap with SS markings.



■ M31 chinstrap showing maker's mark and date.

■ Inter-war period hybrid of the M18 and M31 chinstrap.



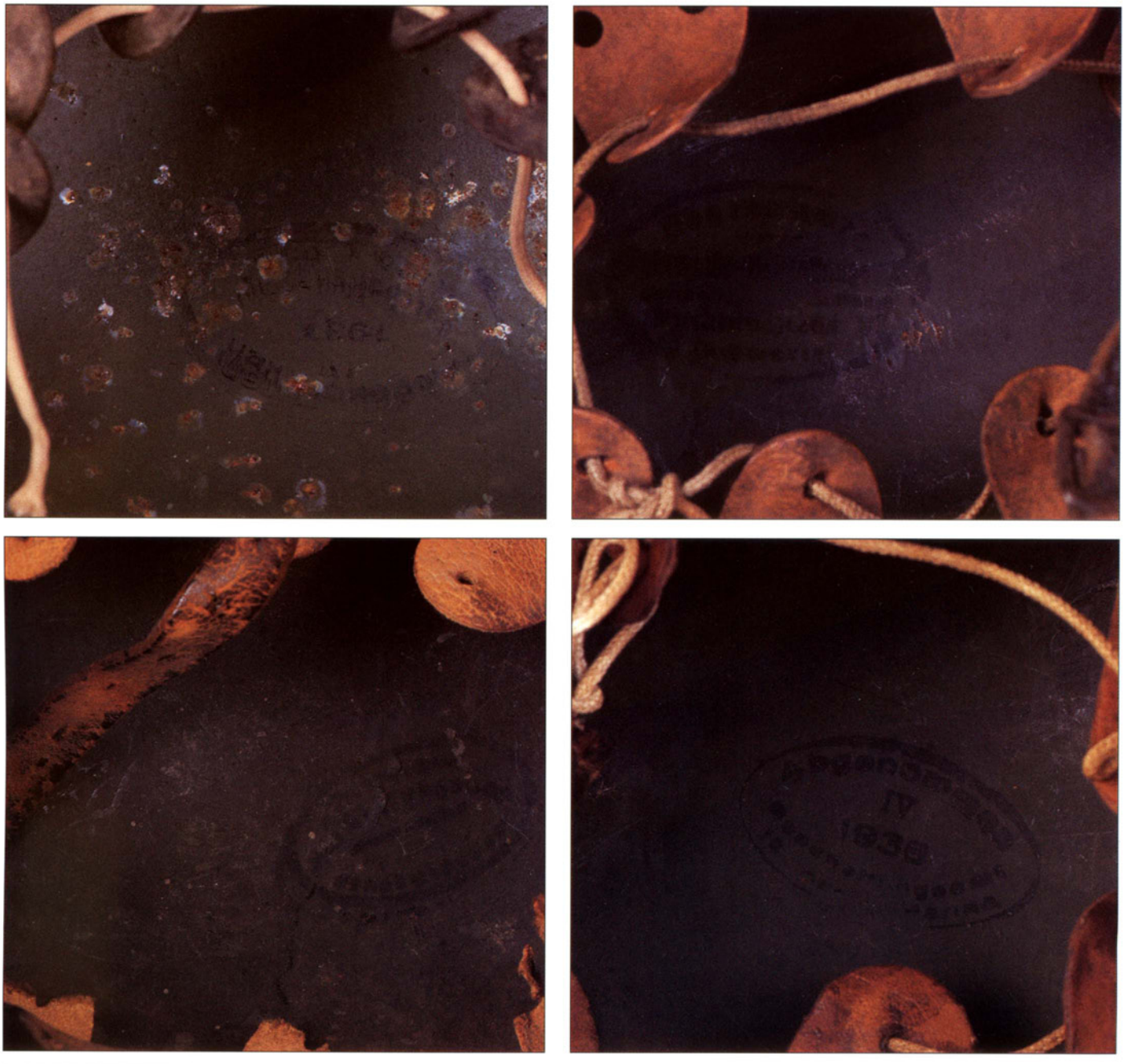
■ M31 liner, showing helmet shell and liner size markings, with the reverse showing maker's mark and date.

MANUFACTURERS' MARKS

■ Details of manufacturers' marks and sizings stamped into the inside left of the visor.

■ M42 helmet shells and liners with manufacturers' marks and sizings stamped into the inside of the rear neck guard.

■ Details shot of the inside of an M35 SS helmet shell and liner. It has been stamped in the normal way with the manufacturer's mark and sizing on the inside left, 'NS64'. In this extremely unusual example, stamped into the neck guard above the steel batch number, is a minute eagle and swastika with SS runes. This would suggest this helmet was one of a batch of specially made helmets for the SS. This helmet is shown in volume one on pages 140-141.



Various examples of armed forces acceptance ink stamps (Abnahmestempel) on the inside of the crown.

OWNER-NAMED

■ Various examples of hand painted owner's names.

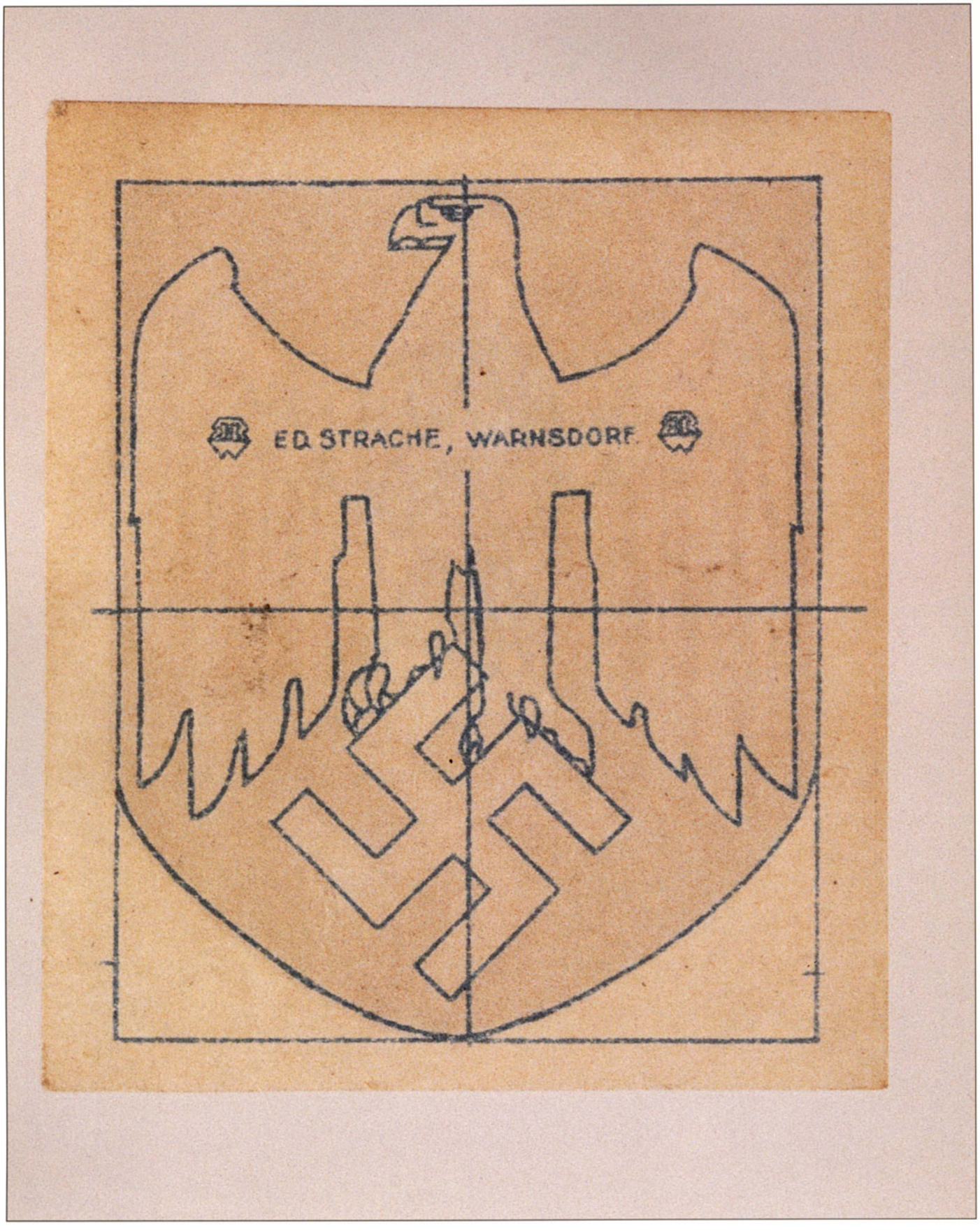
■ Army rank and name inside an SS helmet.

■ Owner's name and fieldpost number, overpainted by a subsequent owner's name and field number.

■ Examples of owner's names written on to the leather liners, showing their SS rank.

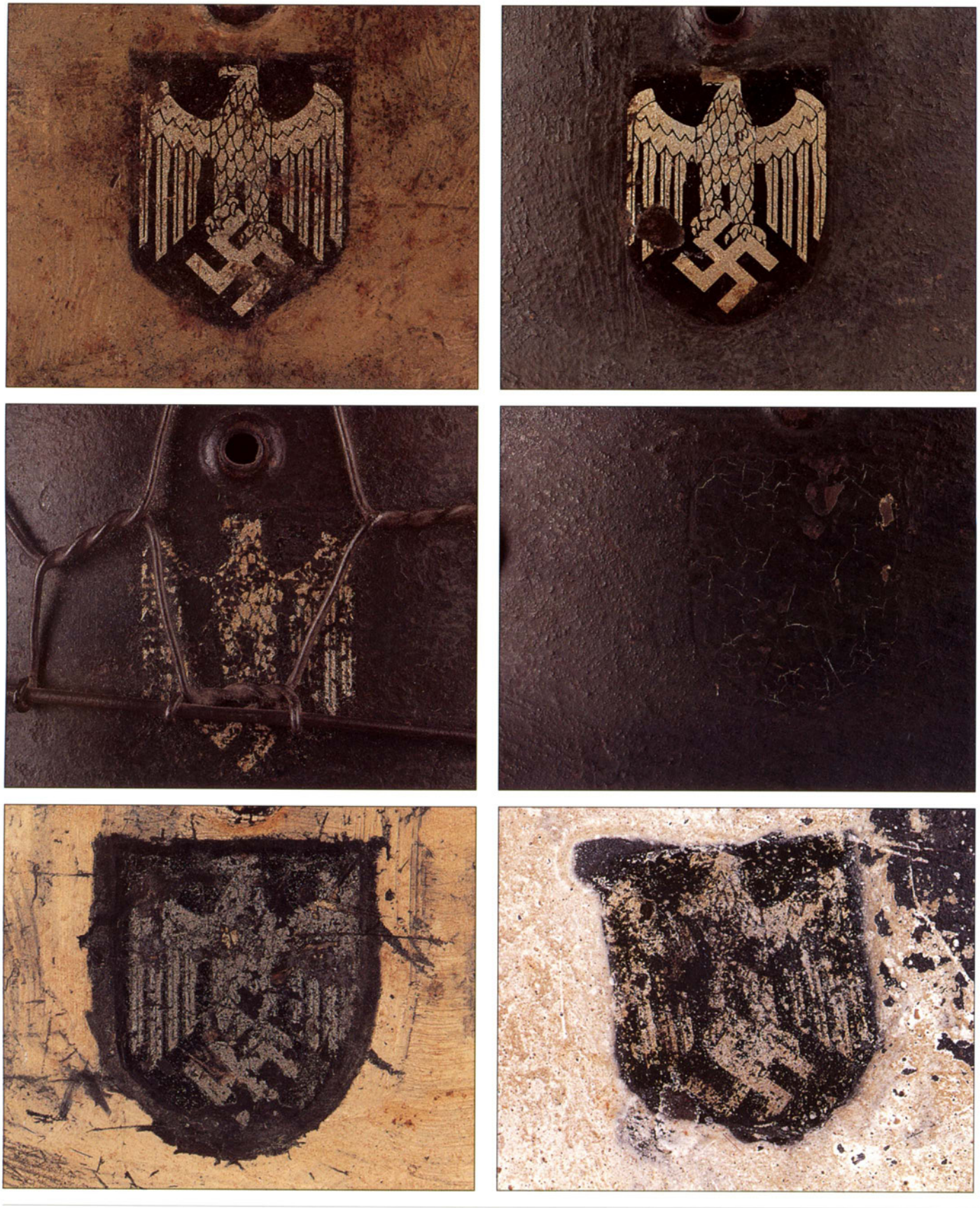
■ Examples of cloth labels, normally used for clothing and other cloth equipment, being used for helmets.

INSIGNIA

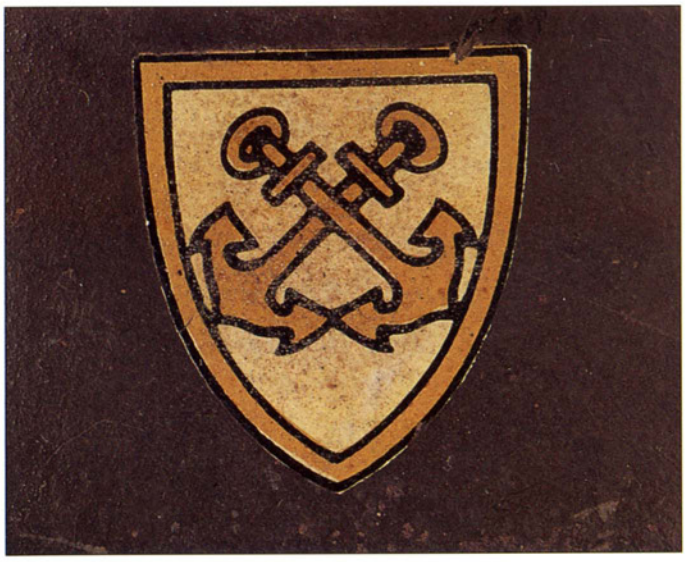


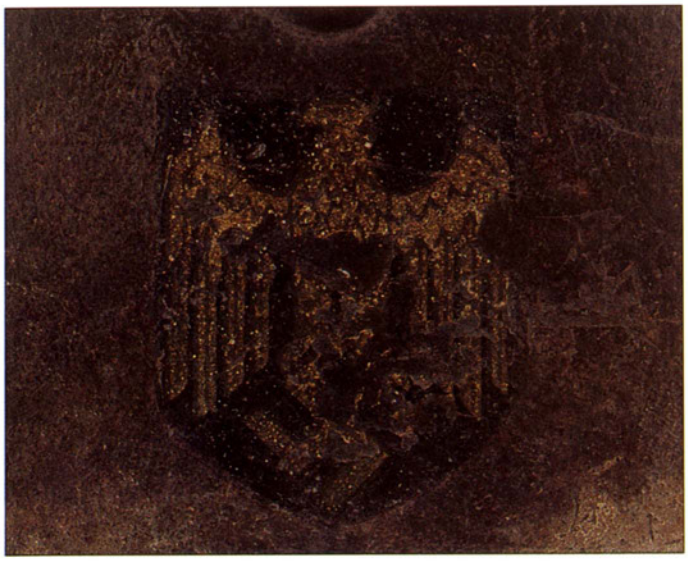
■ The Wehrmacht transfer.

■ Examples of the Wehrmacht silver eagle transfer.

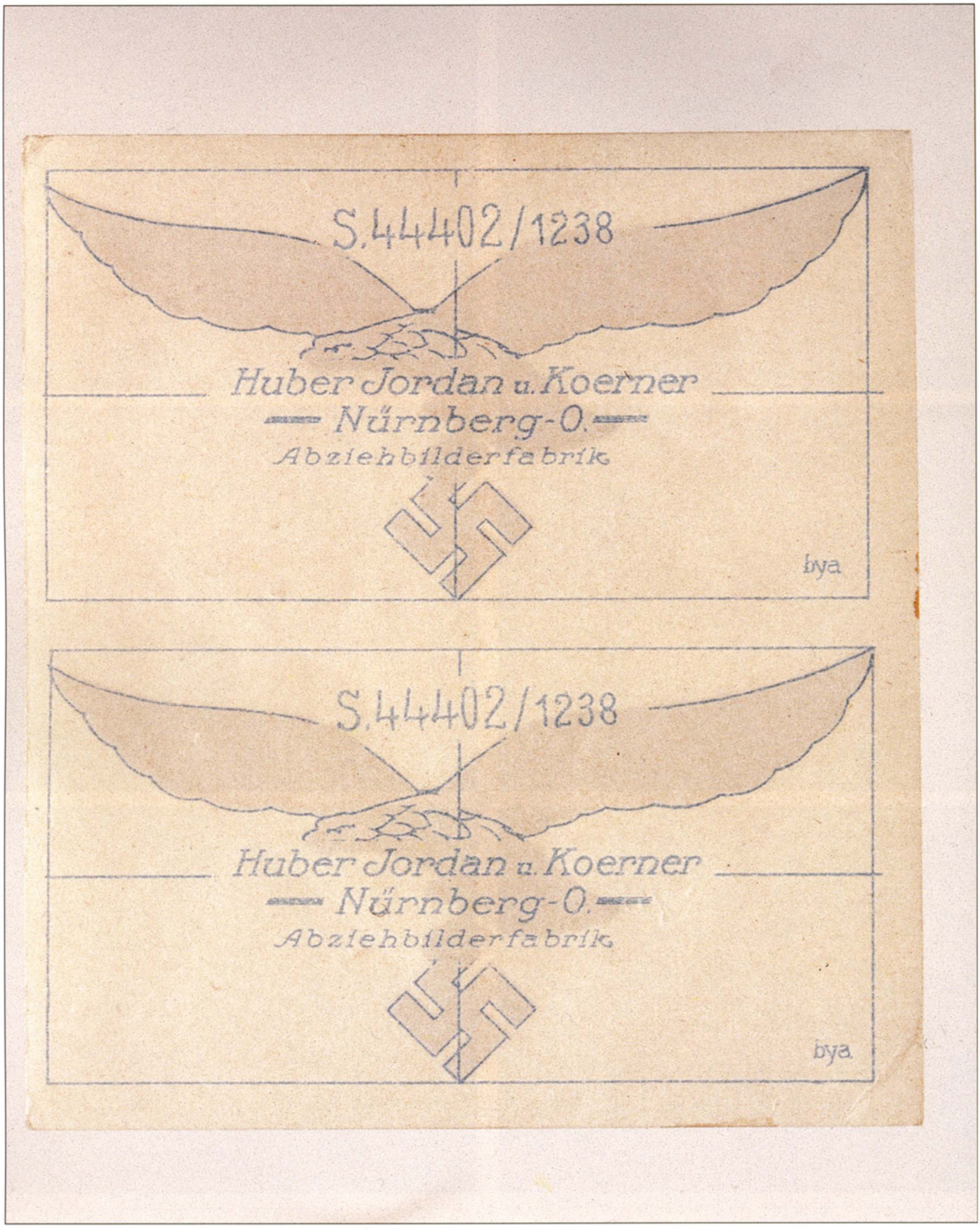


Examples of the Wehrmacht silver eagle transfer on helmets that have been camouflaged.



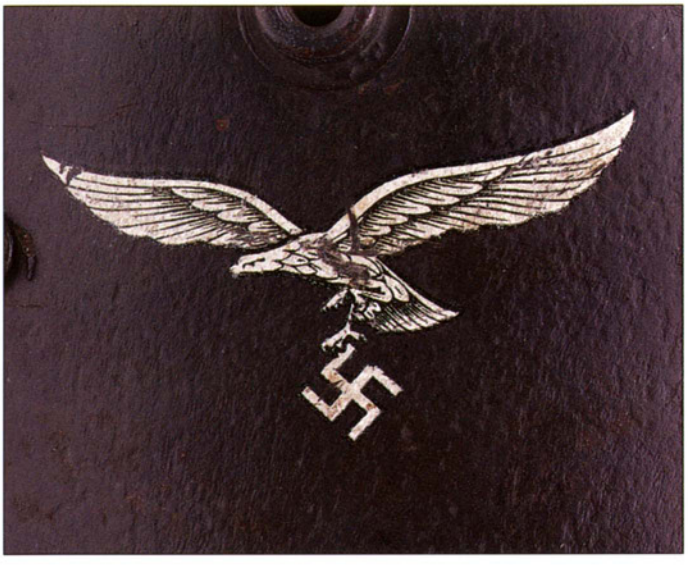


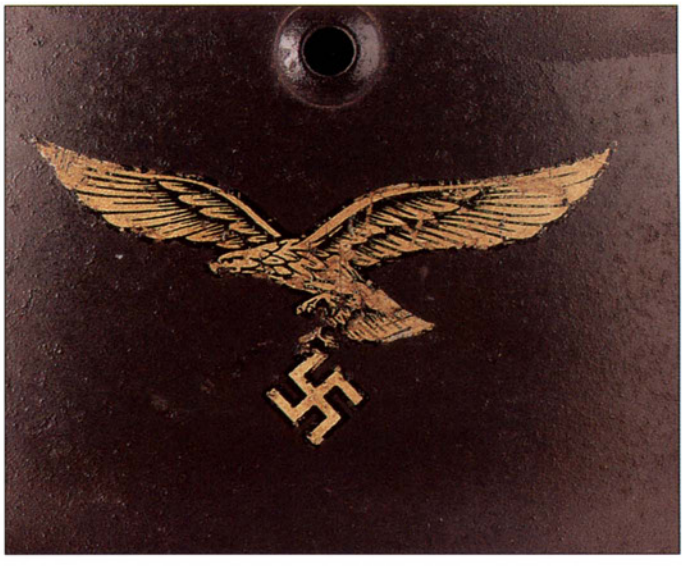
Kriegsmarine gold eagle transfers.

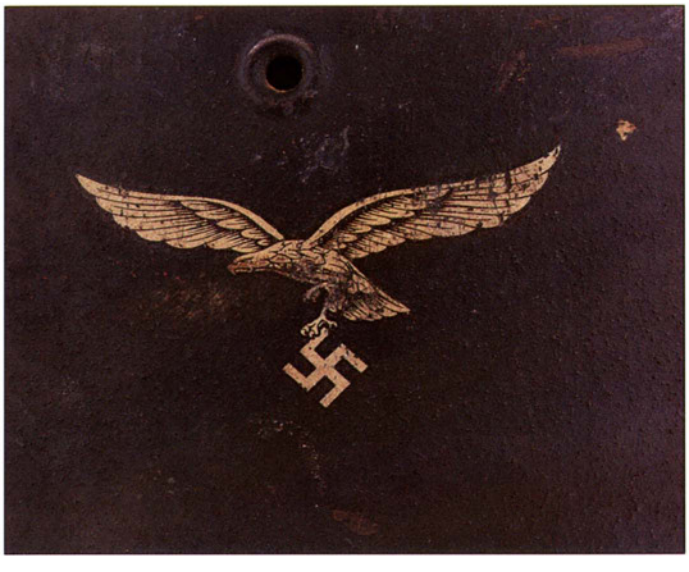


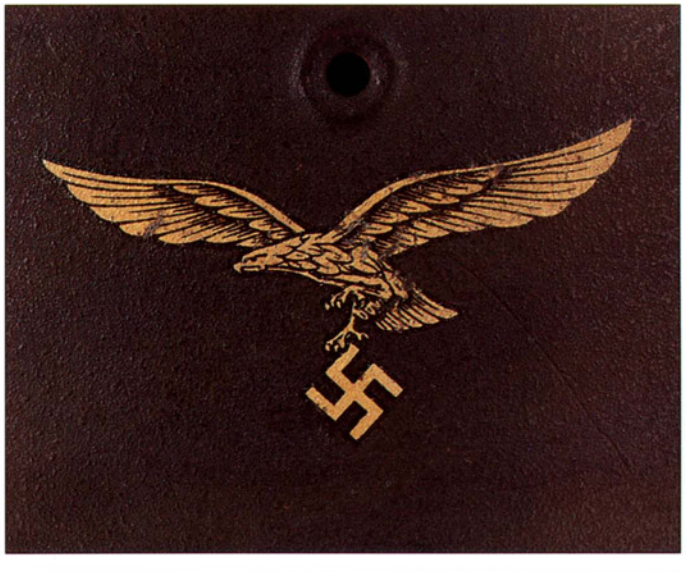
■ Examples of the Luftwaffe late pattern subdued eagle transfer.

■ Luftwaffe early pattern 'droop tail' eagle transfers.



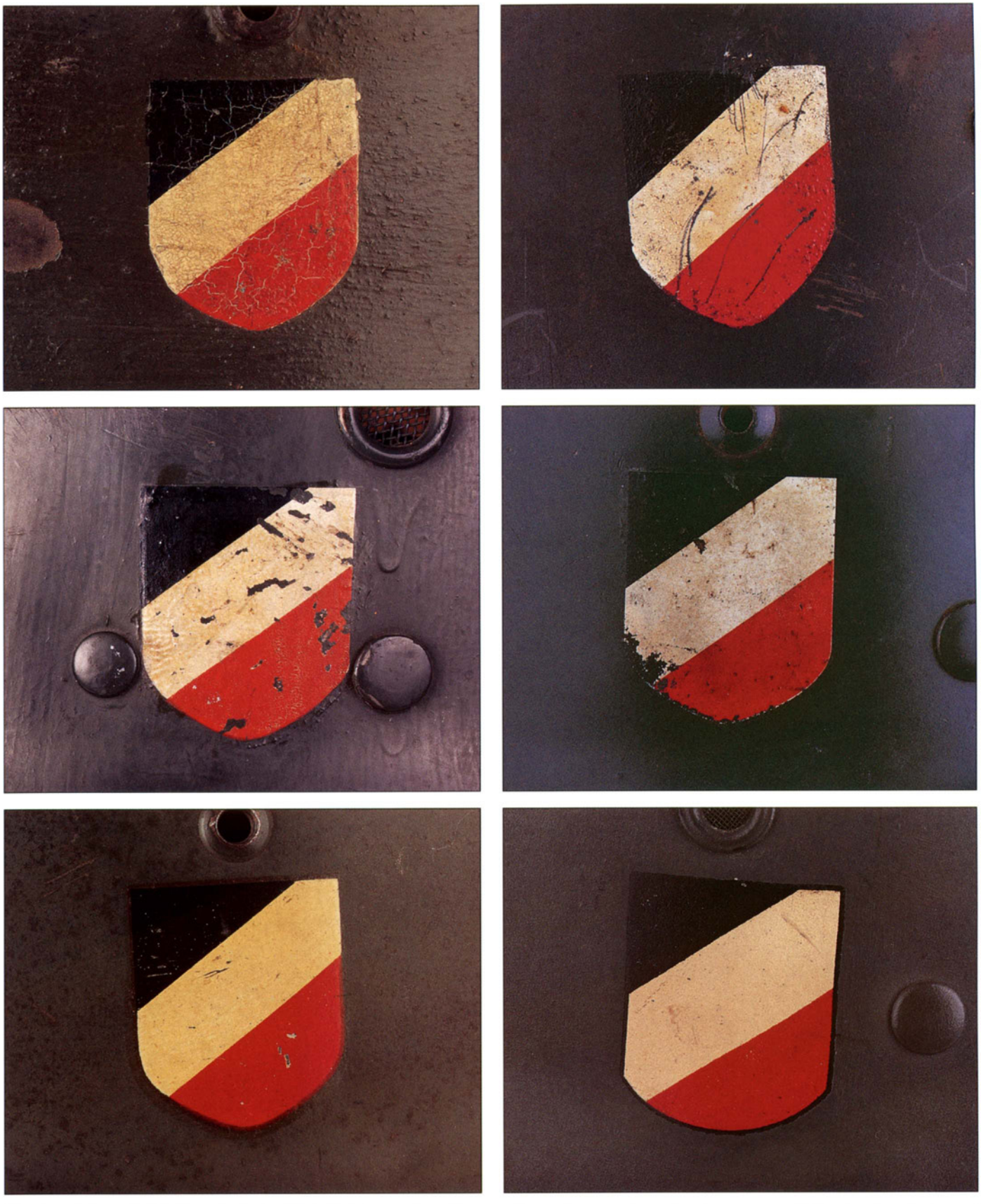




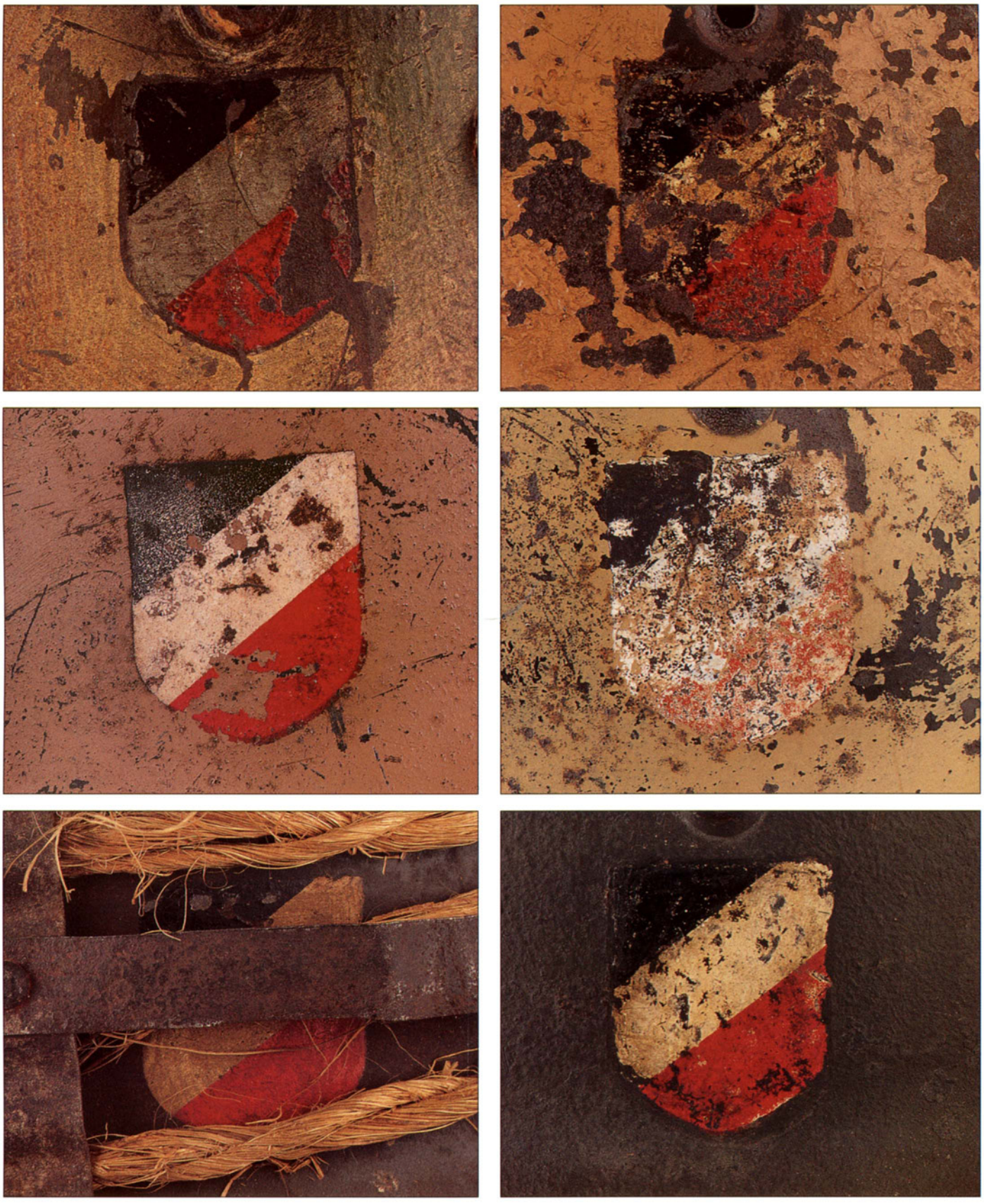


■ Luftwaffe late pattern eagle transfers.

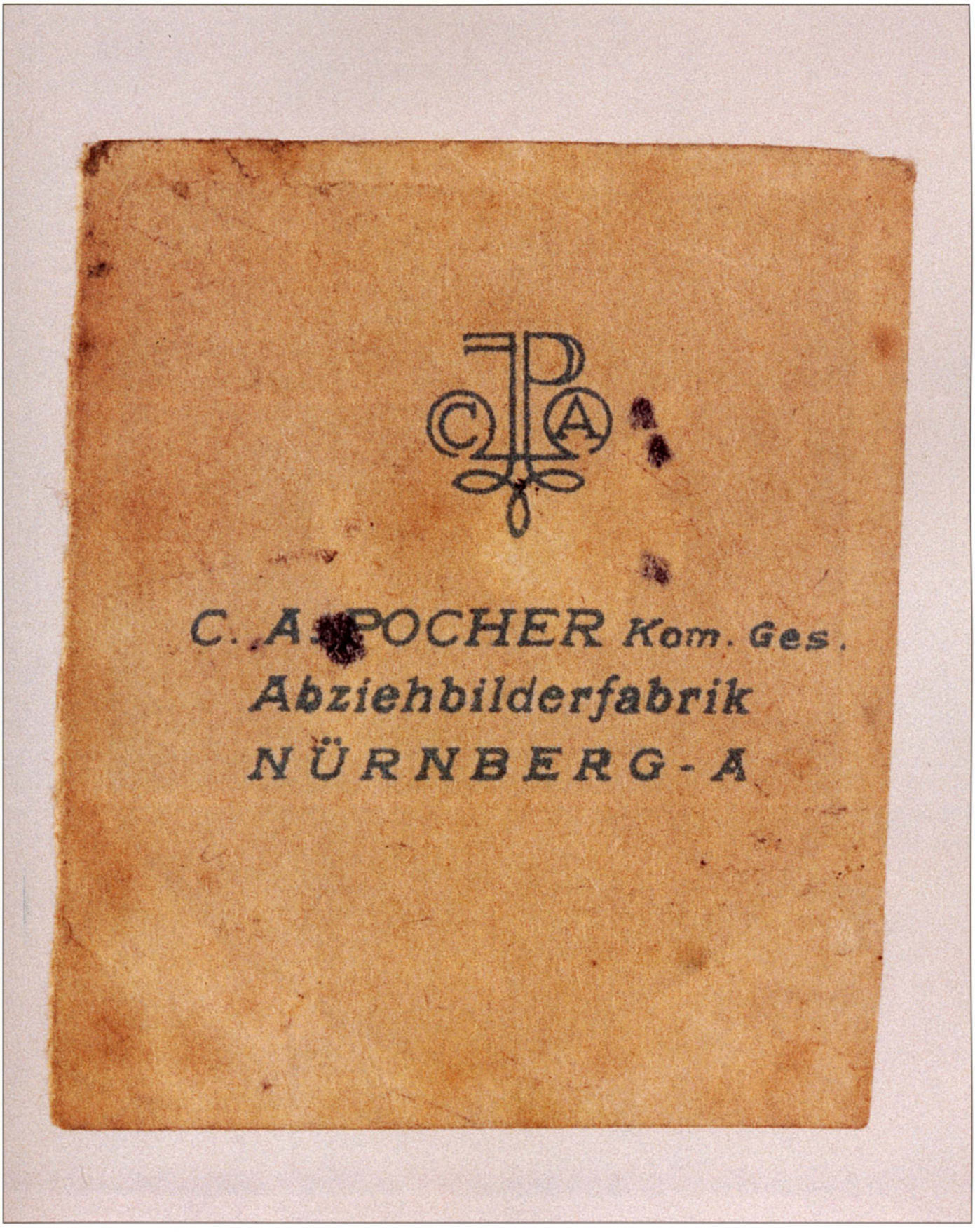
Various examples of Luftwaffe eagle transfers on helmets that have been camouflaged. The transfer at bottom right is the subdued pattern.



■ Examples of the tri-colour national shield for Wehrmacht, Kriegsmarine and Luftwaffe helmets. The transfer at bottom right is a private purchase version on a light-weight parade helmet.



Tri-colour national shields on helmets that have been camouflaged.



■ The SS runic shield transfer.

Examples of the early pattern SS runic shield with the first pattern shown at top left.

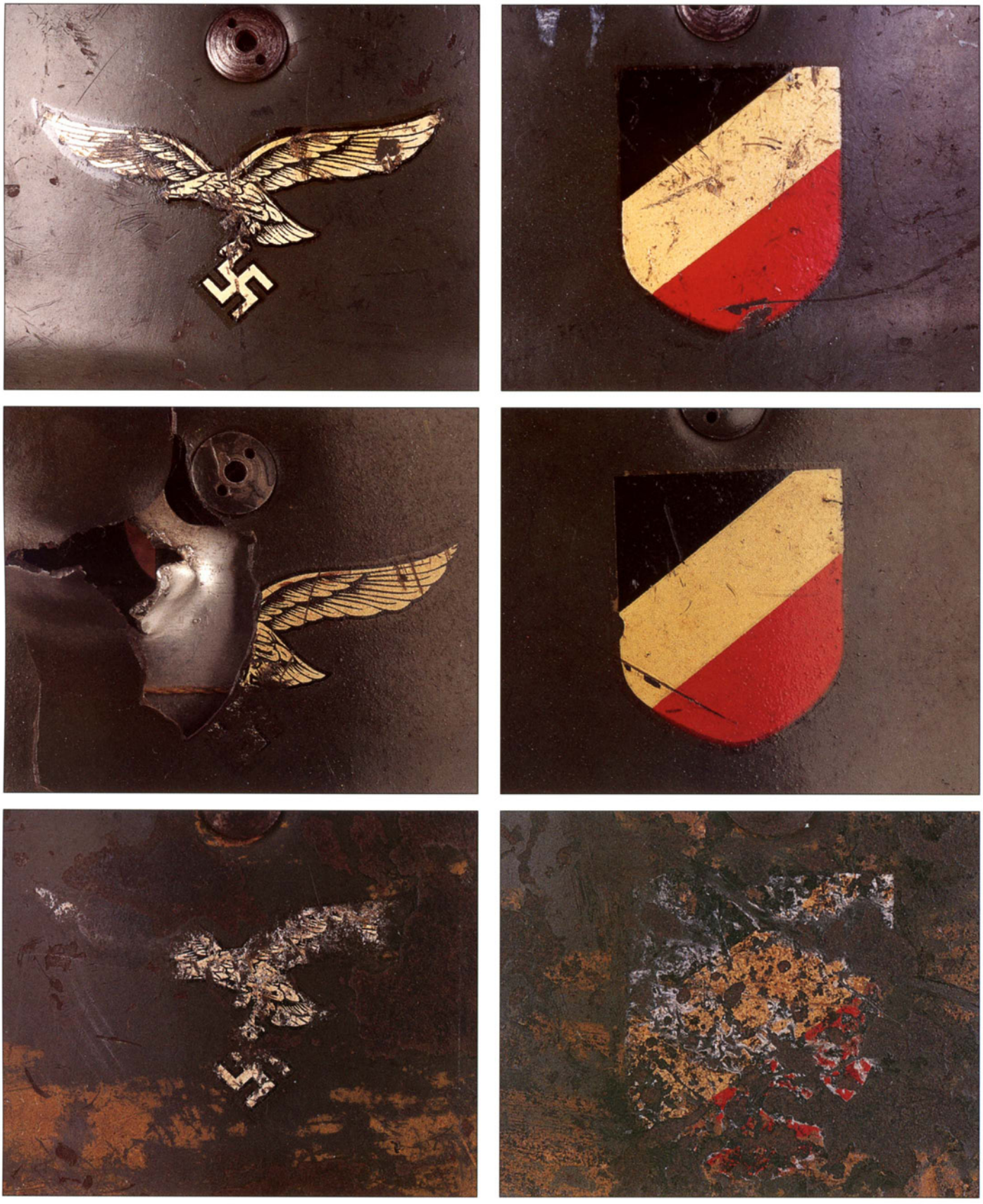
■ Examples of the late pattern SS runic shield with the 'Croatian' variant shown at bottom right.

SS runic shield transfers on helmets that have been camouflaged.

■ The Polizei eagle transfer.

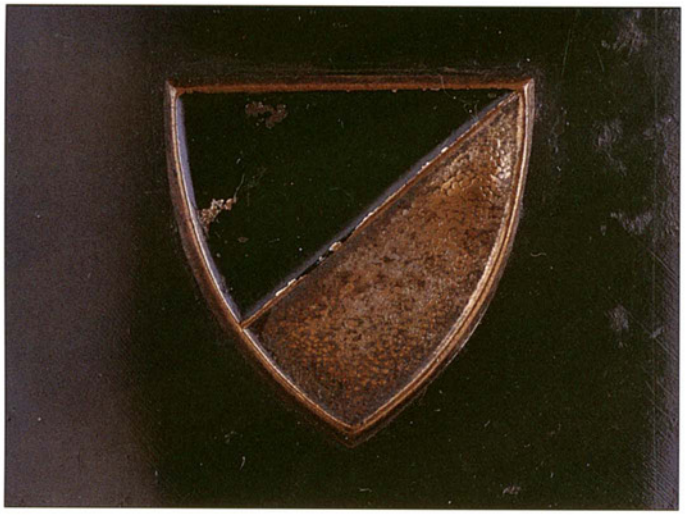
Various examples of Polizei eagle transfers, some on helmets that have been camouflaged.

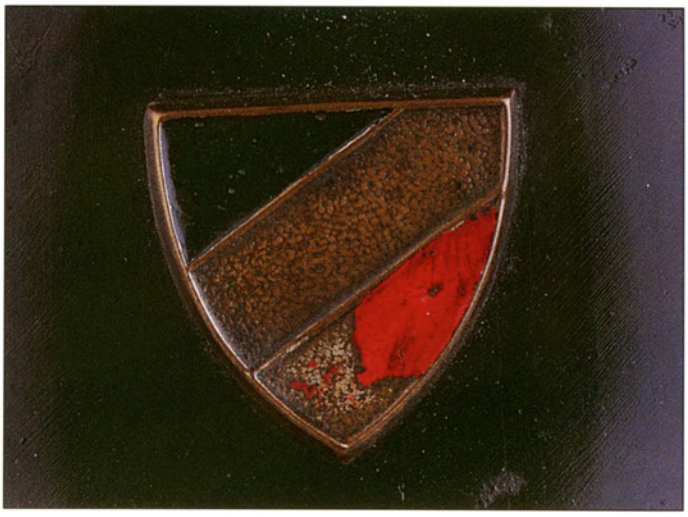
Examples of swastika state shield transfers, some on helmets that have been camouflaged.



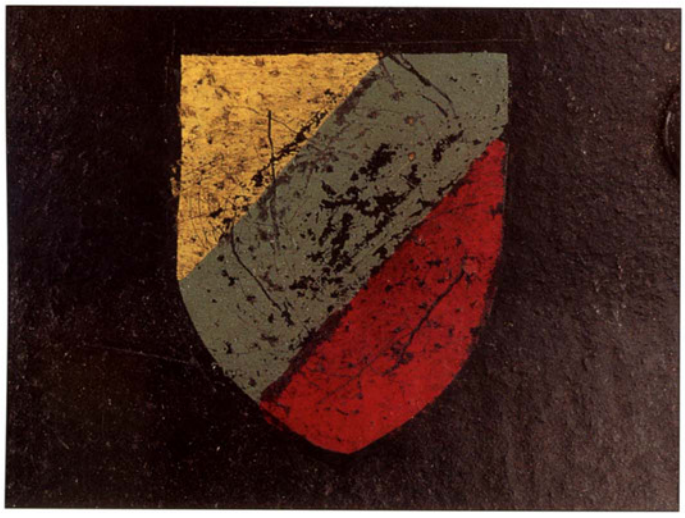
■ Luftwaffe later pattern eagle transfers on Fallschirmjäger helmets, with their corresponding tri-colour national shield transfers alongside.

■ Close-up view of the Freies Indien arm insignia being used here as a transfer on the helmet.





■ Assman-made metal badges: Prussian state shield on the left, tri-colour national shield on the right.



■ The Lithuanian tri-colourshield transfer.

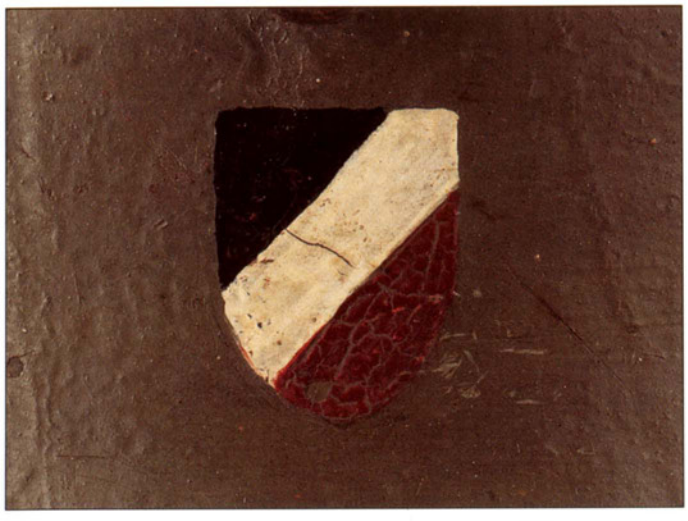
■ The Dutch NSB transfer.

■ The Friekorps Sauerland transfer.

■ The Dutch clog transfer of the II./Zerstörer Geschwader 26 'Horst Wessel'.

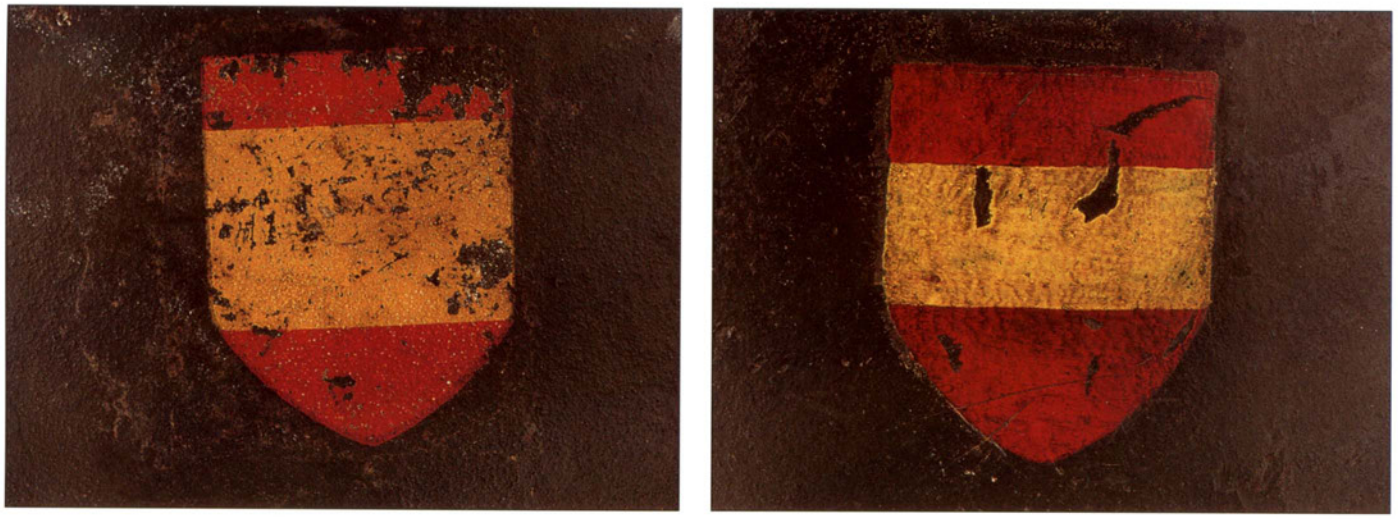
■ Hand-painted insignia: Hitler Jugend diamond on the left, tri-colour national shield on the right.

■ The Feldherrnhalle transfers.

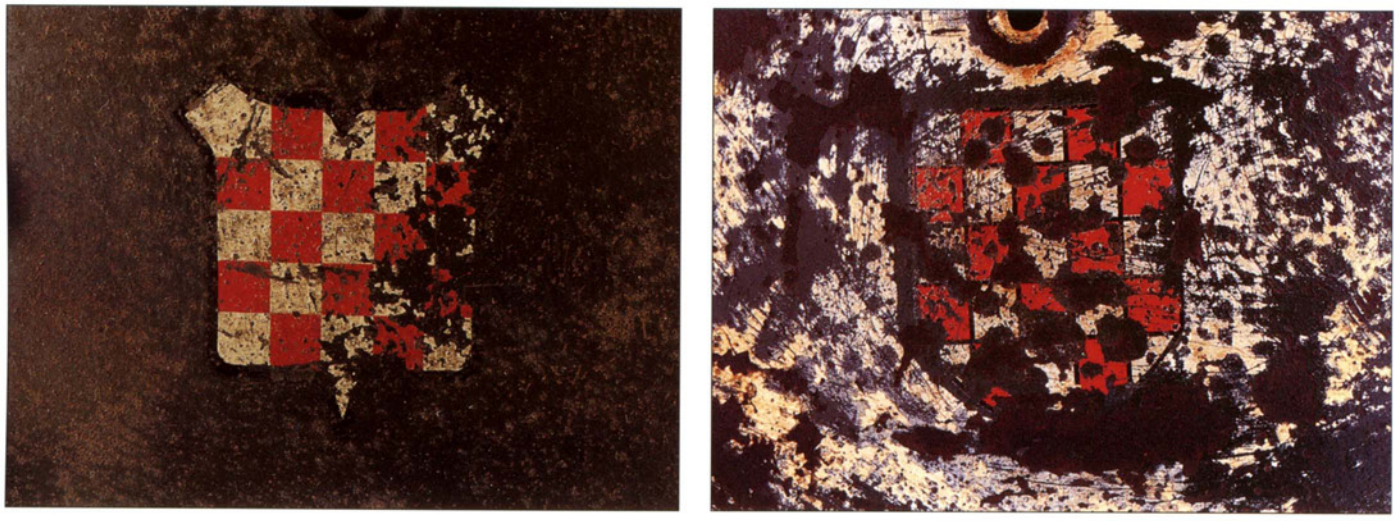


■ Hand-painted Reichswehr shield.

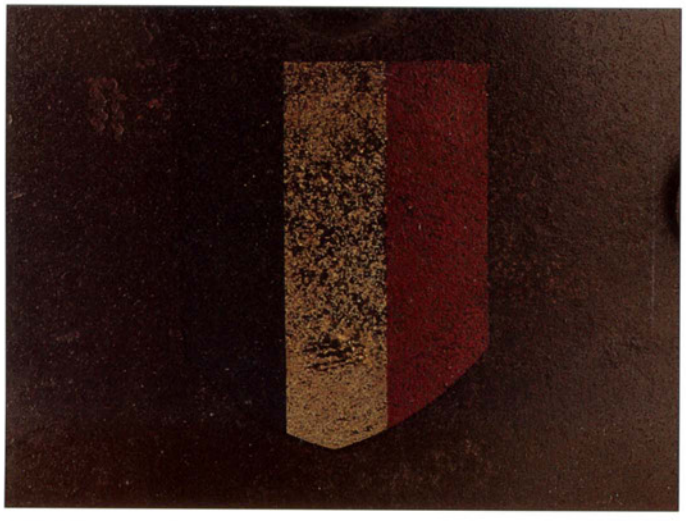
■ Hand-painted emblem of the 7th Staffel Sturm Geschwader 1.



■ The Spanish Blue Division insignia: Transfer on the left, hand-painted on the right.



■ The Croatian transfers: SS style on the left, Wehrmacht style on the right.



■ French tri-colour shield transfer.

■ Sawfish emblem of the 9. U-Flotille (U-boat).

LIGHTWEIGHT

■ Lightweight Vulkanfiber helmet, painted field grey and carrying the twin insignia of the Wehrmacht. These helmets and transfers were privately produced for officers of the Armed Forces for ceremonial use. This example was made by the Erel company and is braced around the edge with a metal rim to aid rigidity.

■ Front and rear views.

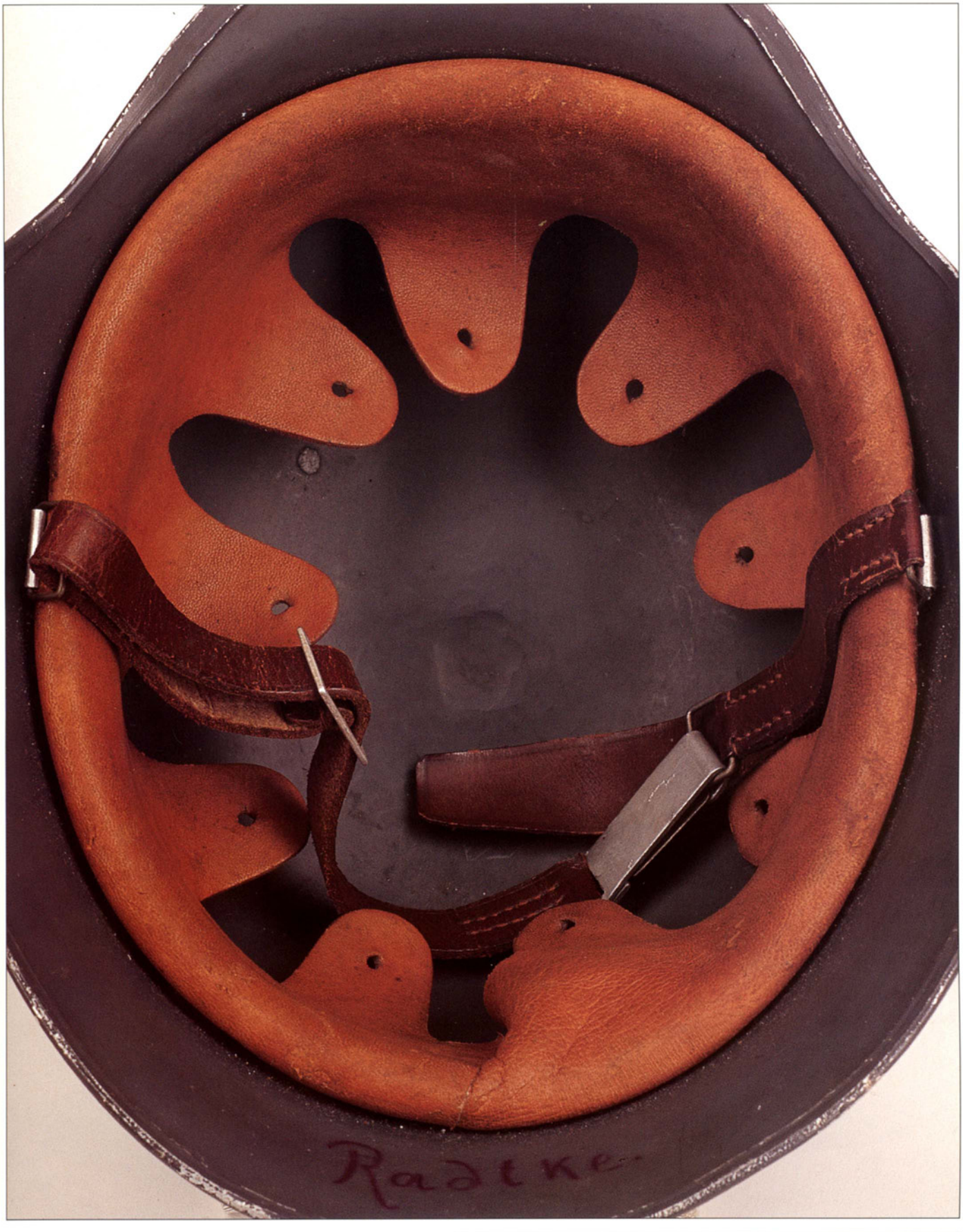
Interior view .

■ Lightweight aluminium helmet, painted blue-grey and carrying the twin transfers of the Wehrmacht. Notice the use of the M18 chinstrap carbine clip. (Collection of Malcolm Fisher - Regimentals)

Interior view .

■ Lightweight aluminium helmet, painted blue-grey and carrying the twin transfers of the Luftwaffe, with the first pattern 'droop tail' eagle. The use of the M18 chinstrap carbine clip seems to have been fairly common on these lightweight helmets. (Collection of Bill Shea - The Ruptured Duck)

■ Side views. Note the brass bushings around the ventilator holes.



■ Interior view.

■ Lightweight M18-style SS helmet, painted gloss black and carrying the twin transfers of the SS with the earlier pattern runic shield on the right. This example is manufactured in steel rather than Vulkanfiber or aluminium. (Collection of Brian Maederer - Military Collectibles)

Rear view.

Interior view showing variation of the M16 liner system.

■ Lightweight steel SS helmet, painted apple green and carrying the twin insignia of the SS with the earlier pattern runic shield on the left. From period photographs, we know that this type of helmet was used by the Sicherheitsdienst (SD), the SS security service. This example has the transfers transposed. (Collection Brian Maederer - Military Collectibles)

A well-used example the lightweight SS/SD steel helmet. The chinstrap is missing but the carbine clip remains. Again, the insignia is transposed.

Rear view.

■ Interior view. Notice the M18 carbine clip, as before.

■ Lightweight steel helmet, painted gloss black and originally for use by Polizei or civil defence units. This helmet has been captured by members of the Polish Home Army, during the 1944 Warsaw uprising. They removed both Polizei transfers and painted the Polish eagle on the front and Polish national flag on the left side only.

■ Front view. Note the spent bullet or splinter strike to the left front.

Interior view.

RELIC

M35 Waffen-SS helmet, carrying the twin SS insignia with the earlier SS runic shield on the right. This helmet was recently found with 6 others in the basement of a building in Kharkov in the Ukraine.

■ M35 Waffen-SS helmet, carrying the twin SS insignia with the earlier SS runic shield on the right. This helmet was originally painted dark apple green, then overpainted with white for winter, then overpainted again in dark field grey. It has survived remarkably well from its burial in Russia.

■ M35 Waffen-SS helmet shell, carrying the twin SS insignia with the earlier SS runic shield on the right. This helmet has been covered in a zimmeritt-like textured paste which no doubt helped to protect it from rust and decay when buried.

■ M40 Waffen-SS helmet shell, painted field grey, and carrying the later SS runic shield on the right. This helmet has been damaged by a bullet which passed through the front at the right exiting at the rear. It was dug up from the Demyansk area in Russia and is therefore quite probably from the SS Division 'Totenkopf'.

■ M38 paratroop helmet, damaged at the front, probably by a shell splinter. It was found near the village of Ribshevo in the Smolensk area in Russia, which was the area occupied by the staff of one of the regiments of the 7th Flieger Division.

Interior view.

BATTLE-DAMAGED

■ M35 helmet with M31 liner and chinstrap. This helmet is painted satin apple green and carries the twin transfers of the Polizei/Feldpolizei.

■ M35 helmet shell with M31 liner and chinstrap. This helmet is painted satin blue grey and carries the twin insignia of the Luftwaffe with the early 'droop tail' eagle.

■ M40 helmet shell with liner band and remains of the chinstrap. This helmet is painted dark field grey and carries the Wehrmacht eagle transfer. It originates from a museum in Russia and displays devastating damage.

■ M40 helmet shell with M31 liner and chinstrap. This helmet is painted blue grey and carries the late pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer.

■ M42 helmet shell with M31 liner and chinstrap. This helmet has been overpainted in the typical 'Normandy' style camouflage colours.

■ M42 Waffen-SS helmet shell with M31 liner and chinstrap. This helmet is painted matte field grey and carries the late pattern SS runic shield on the right side.

SOUVENIRED

■ M35 helmet shell. This helmet was originally painted satin apple green, then overpainted with patches of green and brown camouflage. It was captured by members of the British Army's Royal Army Ordnance Corps, attached to the 6th Armoured Division.

.C

R.A.O.C

■ M40 helmet shell with M31 liner.This helmet has bee overpainted in mustard around the late pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer. (Collection of Bill Shea - The Ruptured Duck)

VIRE
CHERBOURG
JULY 28, 1944
LITTLE THEATRE
COLSTON HALL
CAMP SIBERT
MAYENNE
TENT CITY
CAMP SHANKS
GLASGOW
HMS EMPRESS of AUSTRALIA
ST. MERE
113th Chemical

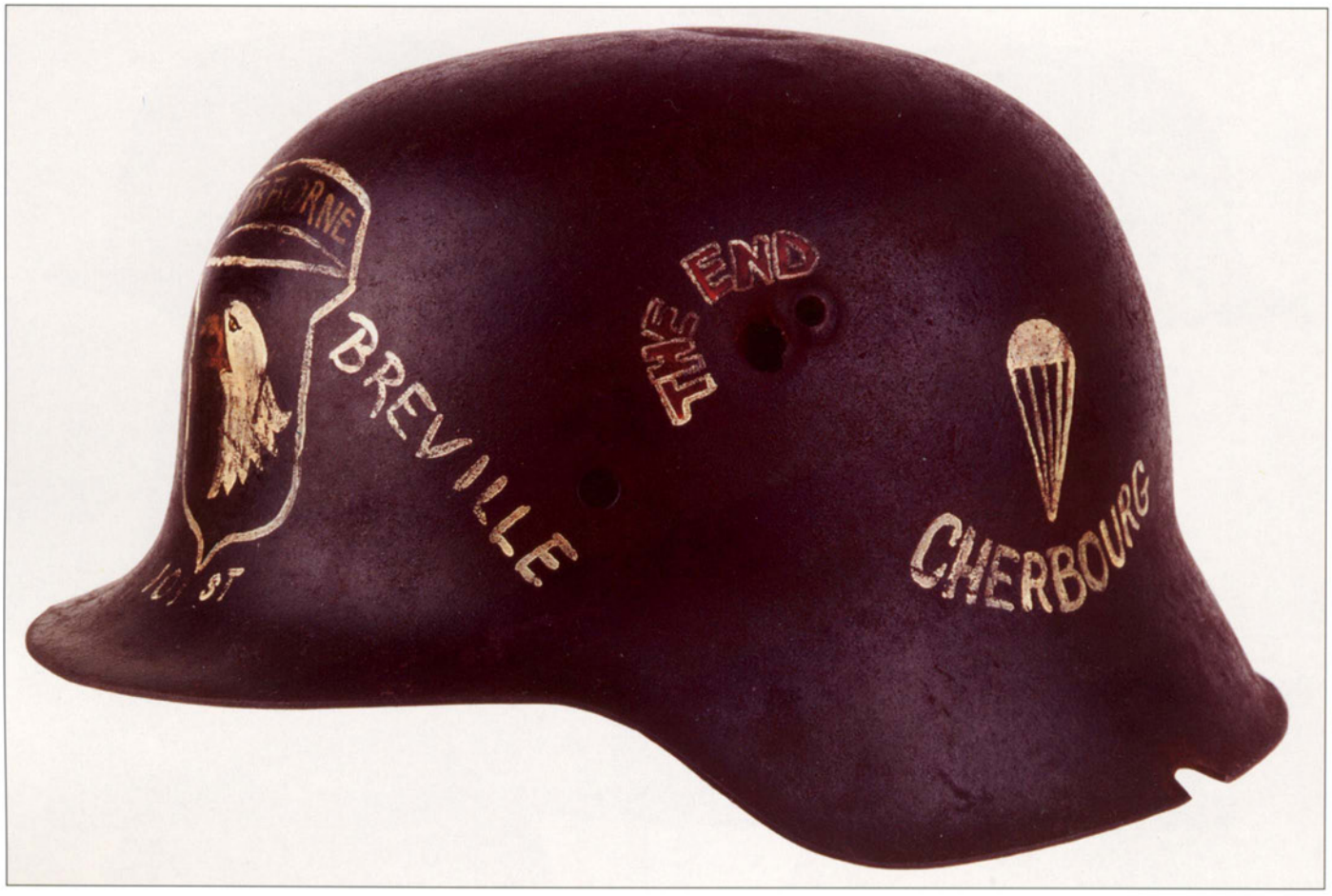
BRISTOL
VILLEDIEU
ST. GERMAIN
DOMFRONT
VOLOGNES
CHARTRES
VERSAILLES
ST. NAZAIRE
LORIENT
JUNE 6, 1944
MONTEBURG
RENNES
MRS. GIBSON
CAEN
CALVADOS
SCOTLAND
LAVAL

■ M42 helmet shell with M31 liner and chinstrap. This helmet was originally painted matte field grey, then overpainted in brown and expertly decorated with twin Wehrmacht insignia, the American star and scenes and maps of Germany, France and Britain. (Collection of Malcolm Fisher - Regimentals)

1945
ENGLAND

194

1941
1945

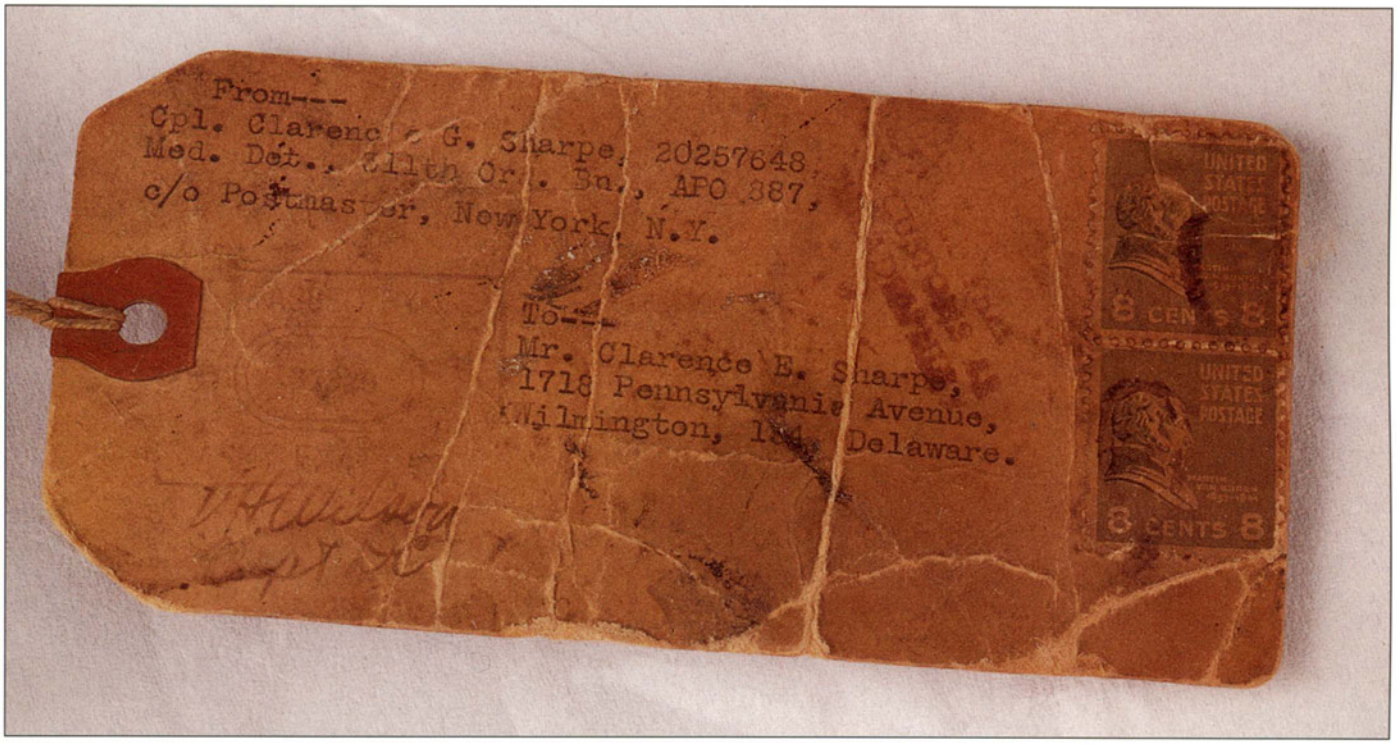


■ M42 helmet shell with M31 liner. This helmet has been souvenired by a member of the U.S. 101st Airborne Division. (Collection of Bill Shea - The Ruptured Duck)

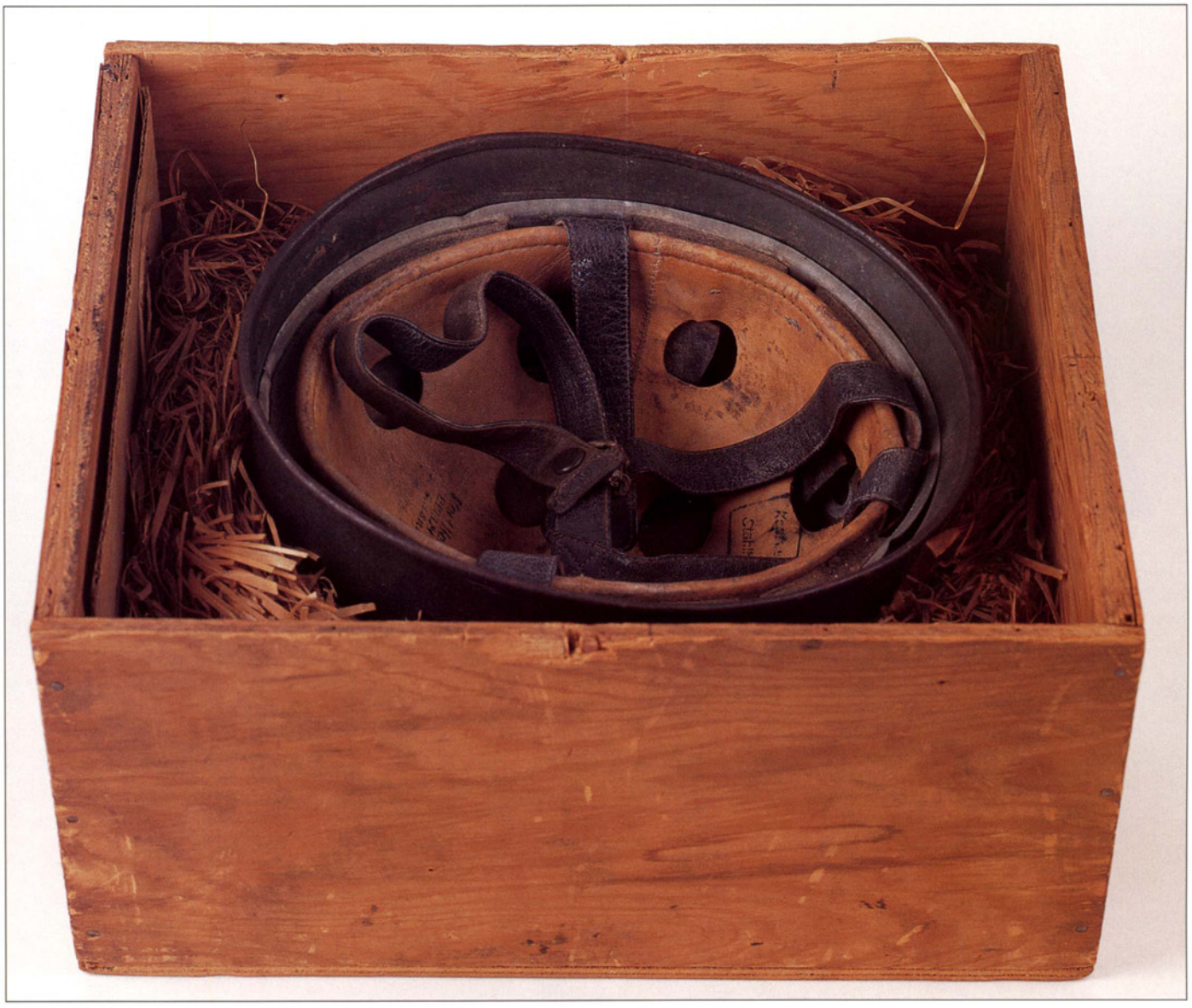
ARNHEM
ZON
ORNE

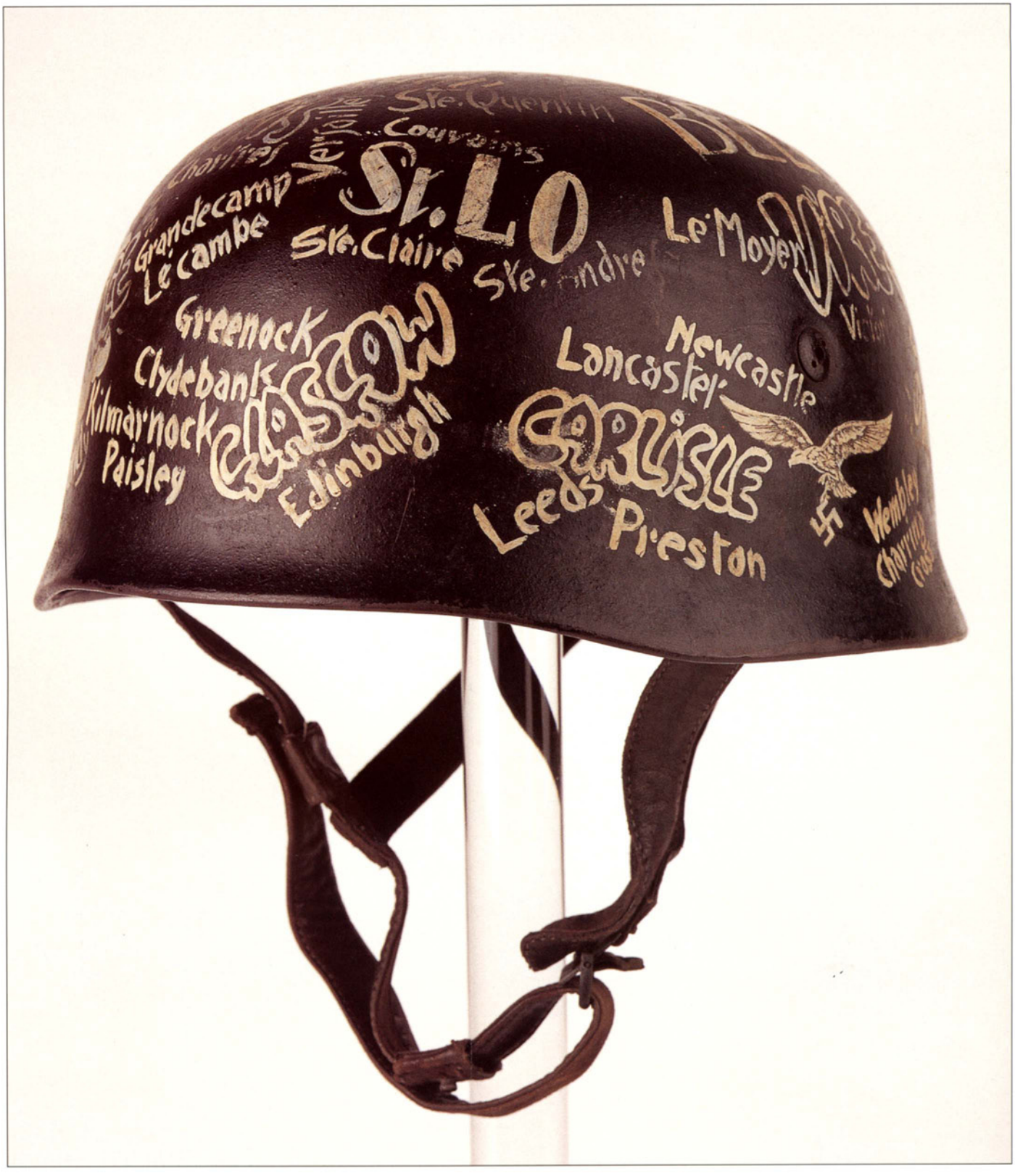
AIRBORNE
ORNE
BREVILLE
101 ST

■ M42 helmet shell with M31 liner. This helmet is painted matte blue grey and carries the late pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer. Its captor has attached a label for posting home to the US. (Collection of Malcolm Fisher - Regimentals)


From---
Cpl. Clarence G. Sharpe, 20257648
Med. Det., 611th Or. Bn., APO 387,
c/o Postmaster, New York, N.Y.
To---
Mr. Clarence E. Sharpe,
1718 Pennsylvania Avenue,
Wilmington, 18, Delaware.
UNITED STATES POSTAGE
8 CENTS 8
UNITED STATES POSTAGE
8 CENTS 8

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell, liner and chinstrap. This helmet is painted matte field grey and carries the late pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer. Its captor placed it in a box with straw padding for shipment home to the US from Paris. The box has only recently been opened and a label found inside, dated 23 April 1945, would suggest it was captured in Germany.

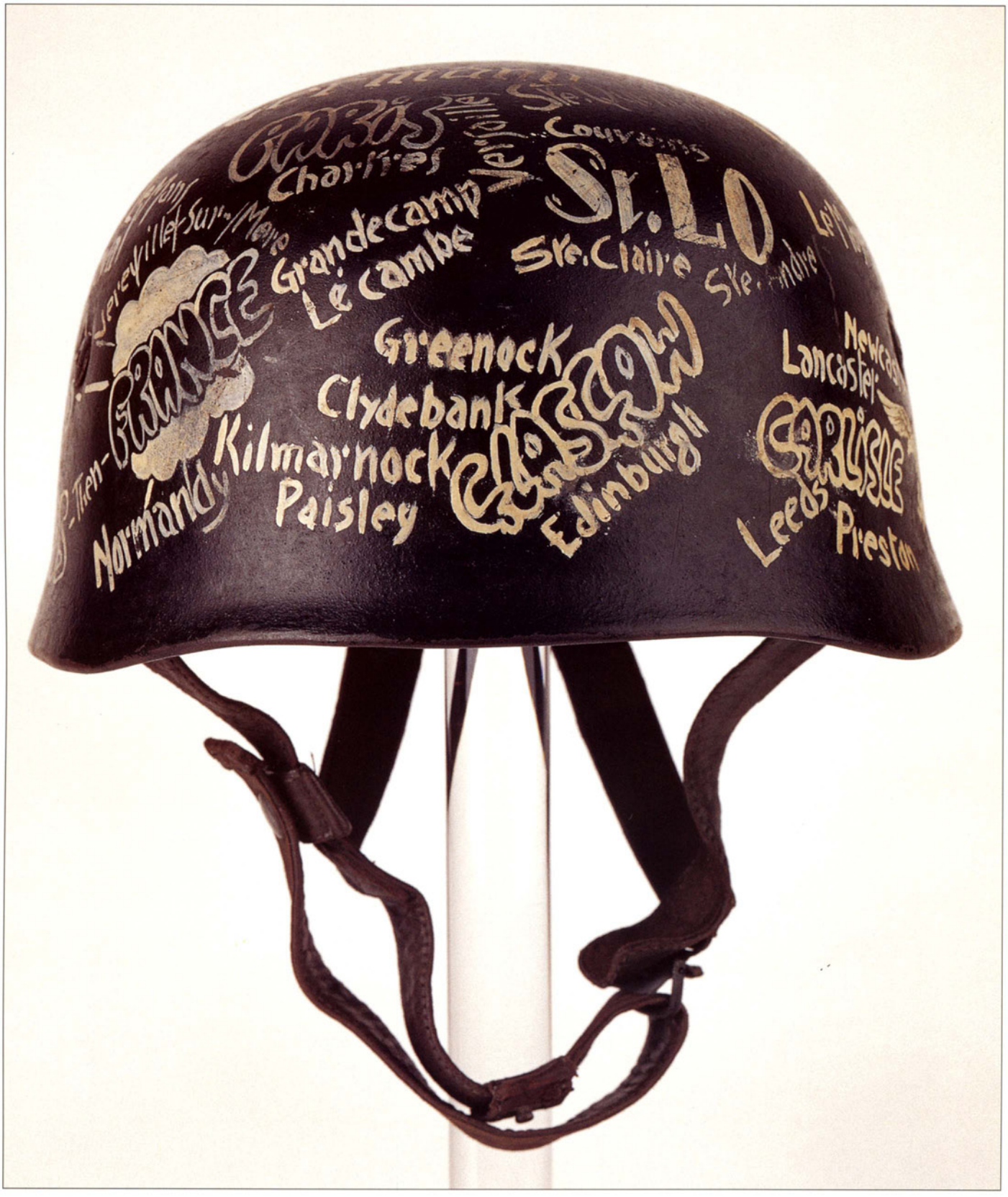




■ M38 helmet shell, liner and chinstrap. This helmet was originally painted matte field grey and has been overpainted in satin black. Notice the careful overpainting in white of the late pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer and extremely elaborate and competent souvenired lettering. (Collection of Ellwood von Seibold)

BELGIUM
St. LO
Le Moyen
VIRE
Brittany
Ste. Claire
Ste. Andre
Newcastle
Lancaster
Victoria
Salisbury
Andover
Leicester Sq.
CARLISLE
Leeds
Preston
Wembley
Charring Cross
Circus ??)
Edinburgh

maastricht
BREST
Rennes
Le Mans
Laval
Vereyville-Sur-Mere
Bournemouth
Farmer's Bar??)
From The MOORS
To SLAPTON SANDS
Devonport
St. Budeaux
Crownhill
The Golden Hind?)
Then
Normandy
FRANCE


Charlies
Grandecamp
Le Campe
St. LO
Ste. Claire
Greenock
Clydebank
Kilmarnock
Paisley
Edinburgh
Normandy
Leeds
Preston

Front view.

HOLLAND
Brittainy
Mons
Ste. Pierre
St. RENAN
Recouverance
Salisbury
Andover
TIDWORTH
Winchester
"The Hoe"
(THE RAM?)
Farmer's
PLYMOUTH
Crownhill
(The Golden Hind?)
Devonport
St. Budeaux
Leicester Sq.
ONDON

Top view.

■ M38 paratroop helmet shell, liner and late chinstrap with the sliding gripper friction buckle. This helmet is painted matte field grey and carries the late pattern Luftwaffe subdued eagle transfer. Labels for posting home to the US have been stuck onto the helmet shell with self-adhesive medical tape. (Collection of Malcolm Fisher - Regimentals)

Side view.

■ Front view.

PERIOD PHOTOGRAPHS

■ M18 helmet without insignia, being worn by a member of the Reichswehr. Shown clearly is the M18 chinstrap with carbine clip.

■ (Left) M18 helmet with an unusually low visor carrying the silver Wehrmacht eagle transfer. The chinstrap is an early version of the M31 with prong buckle and loop. (Right) M18 cut-out helmet with the silver Wehrmacht eagle insignia. This chinstrap is also an early version of the M31 with prong buckle and loop.

■ M18 helmet with what appears to be the Prussian State shield. This chinstrap is also an early version of the M31 with prong buckle and loop.

■ (Left) M16 helmet without insignia. Unusually, this helmet has the M16 chinstrap. As the photograph is dated 1939 on the reverse, it seems likely that rather than being issued with a helmet in a configuration that was over 20 years old, this soldier was supplied the helmet from the photographer's studio props, which may well have dated back to WWI. (Right) M18 helmet with M31 variant chinstrap. It carries the early pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer.

■ Wehrmacht troops in fatigues varnishing steel helmets which are painted the early satin light apple green, carrying twin Wehrmacht insignia. This photograph is no earlier than 1935 as an M35 is amongst the lines of helmets drying off on the floor.

■ M18 helmets with M31 style chinstraps. These helmets carry the twin insignia of the Wehrmacht and are being worn by members of the Reichsarbeitsdienst (RAD) operating under the orders of the Wehrmacht.

■ Stores in a Luftwaffe unit pre-war. On the shelf amongst the WWI aircrew padded helmets and motorcyclists crash helmets are a small stack of M35 helmets with the early pattern 'droop tail' Luftwaffe eagle transfer.

■ (Left) M35 Luftwaffe helmet showing the national tri-colour shield transfer. (Center) M35 Luftwaffe helmet showing the early pattern 'droop tail' Luftwaffe eagle transfer. (Right) Another shot of an M35 Luftwaffe helmet showing with early pattern 'droop tail' Luftwaffe eagle transfer.

■ M35/40 helmets painted a matte finish, being worn with goggles by motorcycle despatch or reconnaissance riders.

■ (Opposite) M35 Wehrmacht helmet , showing the tri-colour national shield, worn by an MG34 gunner.

■ (Opposite) A group of Wehrmacht men, one officer and NCOs, all wearing their M35 satin apple green helmets with twin insignia.

■ Clear photographs of the M31 pattern chinstraps in the version that was to last throughout the war.

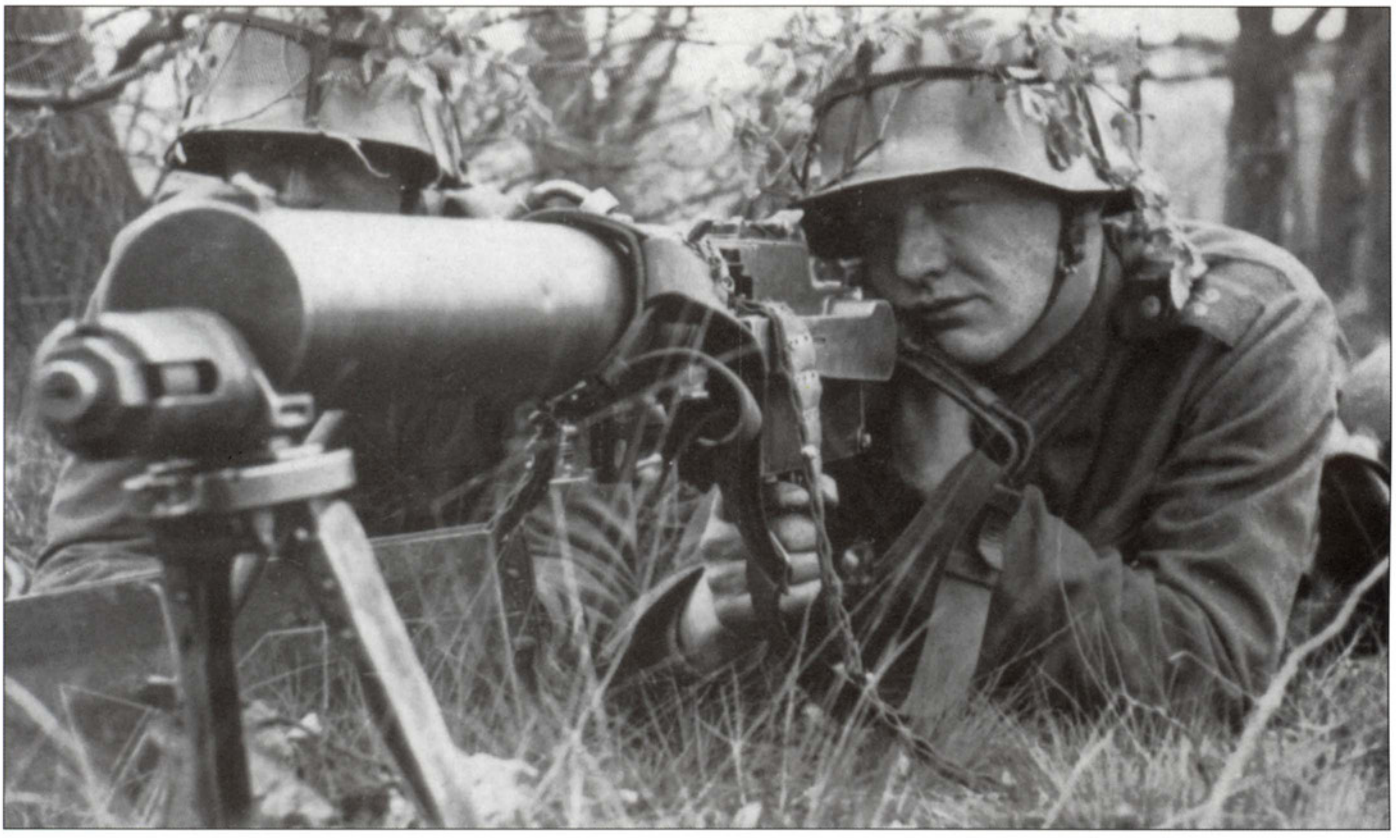
■ M18 and M35 helmets with a mixture of twin, single and possibly no insignia, being worn here by members of the Wehrmacht. The man nearest the camera on the left appears to be wearing an M35 with the transfer of the Danzig Police. This unit was incorporated into the Wehrmacht in 1939.

■ (Left) A German sniper and his camouflage. (Right) A photograph from an early publication about the Blitzkrieg campaign in the Lowlands and France, showing two men queuing for food with helmet covers crudely fashioned from household patterned material and tied down over the helmet shell with wire or twine.

■ (left) An officer and an NCO wear their helmets slung from their belts. This could be done using the chinstrap, or with a custom-made hook sometimes found attached to the liner band for just this purpose. The officer's helmet has a white cloth cover while the NCO's is painted white. (Right) Another view of the same officer. This shot shows the sophistication of his helmet cover, in that it has a reinforced hole to allow the air to ventilate the scalp when worn.

■ (Left) M38 paratroop helmet with wire cage and heavy foliage. probably Normandy in 1944. (Right) M38 paratroop helmet with looped wire cage for foliage.

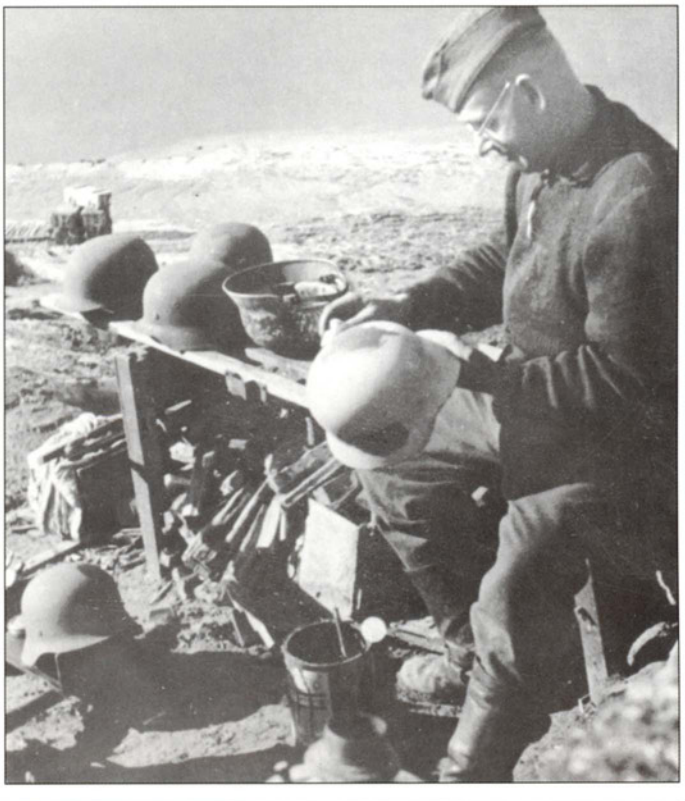
■ Men of the RAD receiving instruction on a small calibre mortar. The two men on the left are wearing chicken wire cages with camouflage attached, while the man on the right is wearing a string netting cover attached to his helmet with metal clips.



■ This pre-war photograph, taken during combat training, shows strips of elasticated material joined together and attached to M18 helmets with clips. Foliage has then been inserted for camouflage.

■ (Left) Sepp Dietrich (on the left) and officers of the SS and Wehrmacht overseeing the field training of members of the SS VT and LSSAH. The soldiers are wearing foliage inserted into crude string netting. (Right) Members of an anti-tank gun have camouflaged their helmets by stuffing foliage into bands placed around their helmets.

■ A group of well-armed soldiers wearing regulation and non-regulation string netting camouflage covers. This photograph was taken in the summer of 1944 in Normandy.

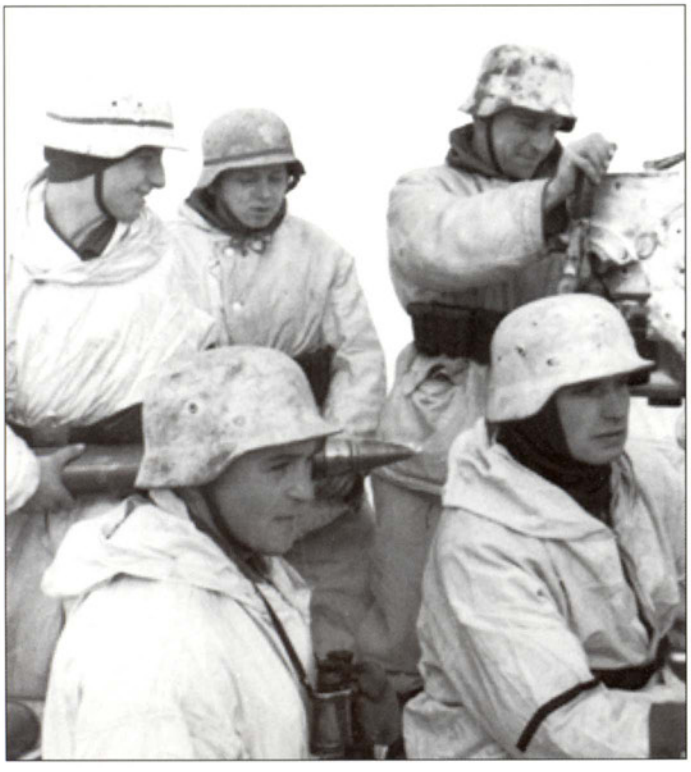


■ This group shot of battle-experienced and decorated soldiers on the Eastern Front in 1944, shows one member wearing the cloth splinter pattern drawstring cover.

■ (Left) With the snow already on the ground, a soldier is painting helmets white. (Right) During the spring thaw, this soldier is repainting helmets field grey over the previous winter white.

■ (Left) Members of a Wehrmacht patrol, on the Eastern Front, wearing helmets painted white. The man in the foreground has carefully painted around the national tri-colour shield.

■ (Right) A soldier in a foxhole somewhere in Russia is wearing his helmet with white cloth cover over his camouflaged hood.



■ (Left) A Waffen-SS soldier in Normandy, in June 1944, wearing the late pattern sprung-clip camouflage cover and goggles. (Right) A photograph taken in 1941 of a Fallschirmjäger, either of the Luftwaffe or Wehrmacht Gebirgsjäger (mountain troops), immediately after landing during the Narvik operations in Norway. He is wearing the M35 helmet, with the Wehrmacht eagle, and not the M38 paratroop model. Presumably, there were not enough to go around.

■ (Left) Anti tank gunners on the eastern front. They are wearing M35/40 helmets painted white for camouflage. Two of the gunnners have a rubber ring, cut from a tyre inner tube, around their helmets. This was usually done so that foliage could be inserted and so it seems a little out of place in the bleakness of the Russian winter. (Right) Army grenadiers pictured during the Arnhem battle in September 1944. They appear to be wearing M40 helmets. Some of them have local foliage added to the crudely made wire camouflage.

■ A group of Reichswehr machine gunners wearing maneouvre bands used here to hold foliage.

■ A vehicle laden with Waffen-SS troops rushes through Rome towards the Anzio invasion front in 1944. Only one man is wearing the sprung-clip camouflage cover.

■ A group of fallschirmjäger of 16th Kompanie. Sturmregiment in the hills above Maleme, during the airborne invasion of Crete in May 1941. Most men are wearing the early olive green clip-on cloth cover.

■ A group of Waffen-SS men in Russia pausing for a smoke. The man in the centre is wearing an M42 helmet with late pattern SS runic shield transfer.

■ A photograph taken during the first few days of Operation Barbarossa. These men of the Waffen-SS Division 'Totenkopf' are wearing the early style M35 satin apple green helmets with regulation twin SS transfers. Behind them is a large group of Russian prisoners.

■ This Waffen-SS man has foliage stuffed into a thin band around his helmet.

An officer of the Waffen-SS Division 'Totenkopf' wearing an early pattern sprung-clip cloth cover. Even though this is a black and white photograph, we know the autumn side is showing because we can see the reinforcing strip across the top of the visor which was sown onto this side of certain cover variants.

■ A photograph taken during the early stages of Operation Barbarossa in summer/autumn 1941. This MG34 gunner is wearing the earliest pattern sprung-clip cloth cover, the clips being sewn onto the cover rather than riveted.

■ A grim-faced group of men from Waffen-SS Division 'Nord' wearing their early pattern sprung-clip covers.

■ (Left) A young Panzer grenadier from the 12th SS Division 'Hitlerjugend' in Normandy 1944, wearing foliage inserted into the loops of his late pattern sprung-clip cloth cover. (Right) This SS 'Hitlerjugend' man, also in Normandy 1944, demonstrates the liberal use of foliage in his helmet cover.

■ This NCO officer cadet of SS Schule Tölz has daubed his helmet with mud as camouflage.

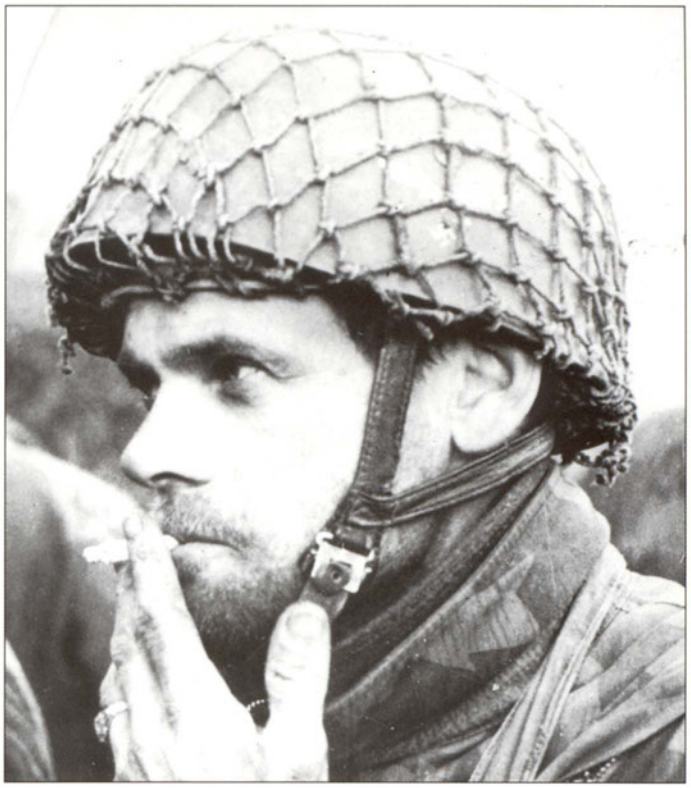
■ (Left) A fine example of a bread bag strap twisted over this SS man's M42 helmet. It appears the helmet carries no insignia.

■ (Top right) A photograph taken from a French wartime publication of a Waffen-SS man wearing a first pattern sprung-clip SS cover, over which has been placed a leather carrying strap with the hook for attachment to the belt visible at the back.

■ (Right) This Waffen-SS man from the 12th SS Division 'Hitlerjugend' in Normandy, wearing an early pattern SS sprung-clip cloth cover. What is particularly interesting is that he has laced a length of string through the cover for attaching foliage. This practice became unnecessary with the addition of loops on the later pattern cover.

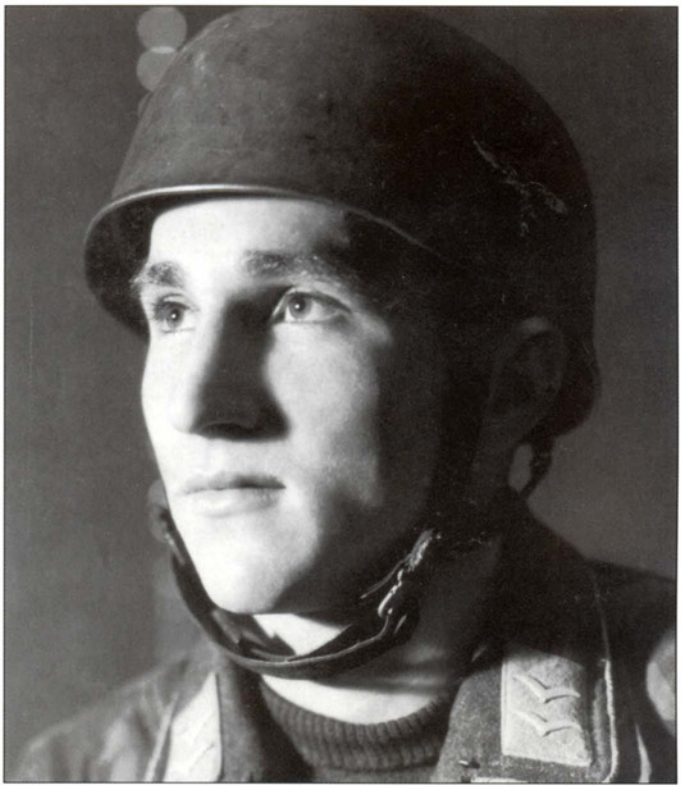
■ Waffen-SS men, on the Eastern Front in autumn 1944, wearing helmet covers. Later photographic evidence tends to suggest that supplies of the covers were dwindling.

■ A group of paratroopers taking shelter in a small ravine on Crete during the airborne invasion in May 1941. Some of the men are wearing the early pattern olive green clip-on cloth covers, although the later splinter pattern clip-on cover had just been introduced.



■ (Left) A Fallschirmjäger is painting his satin apple green helmet, carrying the late pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer, white for winter. (Right) This Fallschirmjäger, taking a cigarette break during the Allied invasion of Italy in 1944, is wearing a captured string netting cover, probably British. He is wearing it over his matte field grey M38 helmet with late pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer.

■ (Left) M38 paratroop helmet with splinter pattern clip-on cloth cover over which has been placed a bread bag strap for foliage. (Right) A Fallschirmjäger surveying the enemy through a binocular sight in Italy in 1944. He is wearing the early pattern olive green clip-on cloth cover.



■ (Left) M38 paratroop helmets being worn on Crete in May 1941. The man in the foreground does not have the tri-colour national shield transfer on his helmet. (Right) A studio portrait of a young Fallschirmjäger wearing his matte field grey M38 helmet with the late pattern Luftwaffe eagle transfer. The complicated chinstrap arrangement can be clearly seen.

■ (Left) A Fallschirmjäger machine gunner, during training, wearing the early pattern olive green clip-on cloth cover, with a maneouvre band over the top. (Right) A photograph taken by the Polish forces in Italy. It shows the skeletal remains of a Fallschirmjäger wearing his M38 helmet and splinter pattern camouflage smock. He was killed during the fighting for Monte Cassino.

■ Gebirgsjäger men who landed by parachute during the Narvik campaign in Norway in 1941, pictured here with the M38 paratroop helmets with which they were issued for this particular operation. Note the light colored, foam padded liner, indicative of early helmets.

■ A Fallschirmjäger officer and his men in Narvik. They are all wearing the M38 helmet with satin apple green finish and twin Luftwaffe transfers. The officer is wearing the late pattern eagle transfer. Note the early sliding buckle chinstrap.

■ A guard detachment of the LSSAH, wearing a mixture of black-painted M18 and M35 helmets with twin SS transfers. The man carrying the 'Blood Flag' is Otto Grimminger, who first carried it during the Munich Putsch of 1923.

■ A group of men from LSSAH, wearing M18 helmets with the twin insignia combination peculiar to that unit: the earlier pattern SS runic shield on the right side and the national tri-colour shield on the left.

■ SS men wearing M18 helmets painted satin black with SS transfers.

■ (Left) LSSAH men with a WWI vintage MG08. They are wearing M18 helmets painted satin apple green with the tri-colour national shield. Note the gothic script Adolf Hitler cuff title. (Right) A close-up of 'Blood Flag' bearer Otto Grimminger wearing his satin black M35 helmet.

■ (Top) Three Waffen-SS men at their dugout on the Normandy invasion front in 1944. Two of them are wearing the SS sprung-clip cloth cover, the third has camouflaged his helmet in the 'Normandy' style.

■ (Right) Another shot of the two Waffen-SS men shown on page 280. The man in the background has used the bread bag strap to hold foliage. Closer inspection of the M40 helmet on the NCO in the foreground shows that originally it carried the SS runic shield on the left side which is now barely visible under a coat of matte field grey paint.

■ (Left) Waffen-SS personnel of an armoured unit, possibly Sturmgeschütz, being inspected by their officers. The man on the left is wearing an M40 helmet painted matte field grey with the early pattern SS runic shield.

■ Waffen-SS NCO during a pause in the fighting for Kharkov in February 1943. He is wearing a well-used satin apple green M35 helmet with a battered early SS runic shield. Earlier photographs of this man in Kharkov show him wearing the usual spring-clip SS helmet cover. Presumably, the SS-Kriegsberichter asked him to remove it in order to reveal the SS insignia.

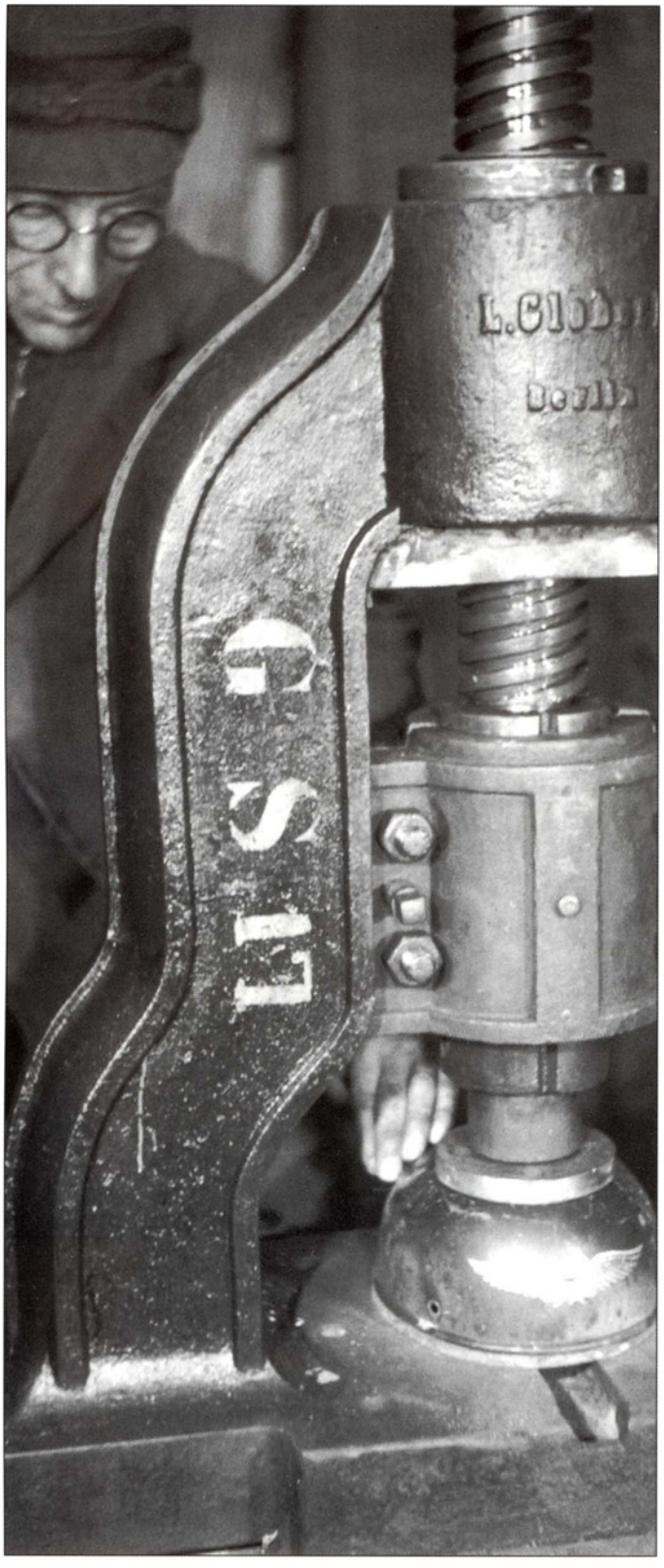
■ Waffen-SS NCO in 1940, wearing a satin apple green M35 helmet with early SS runic shield transfers on both sides, refuting the suggestion that this configuration was only for foreign volunteers.

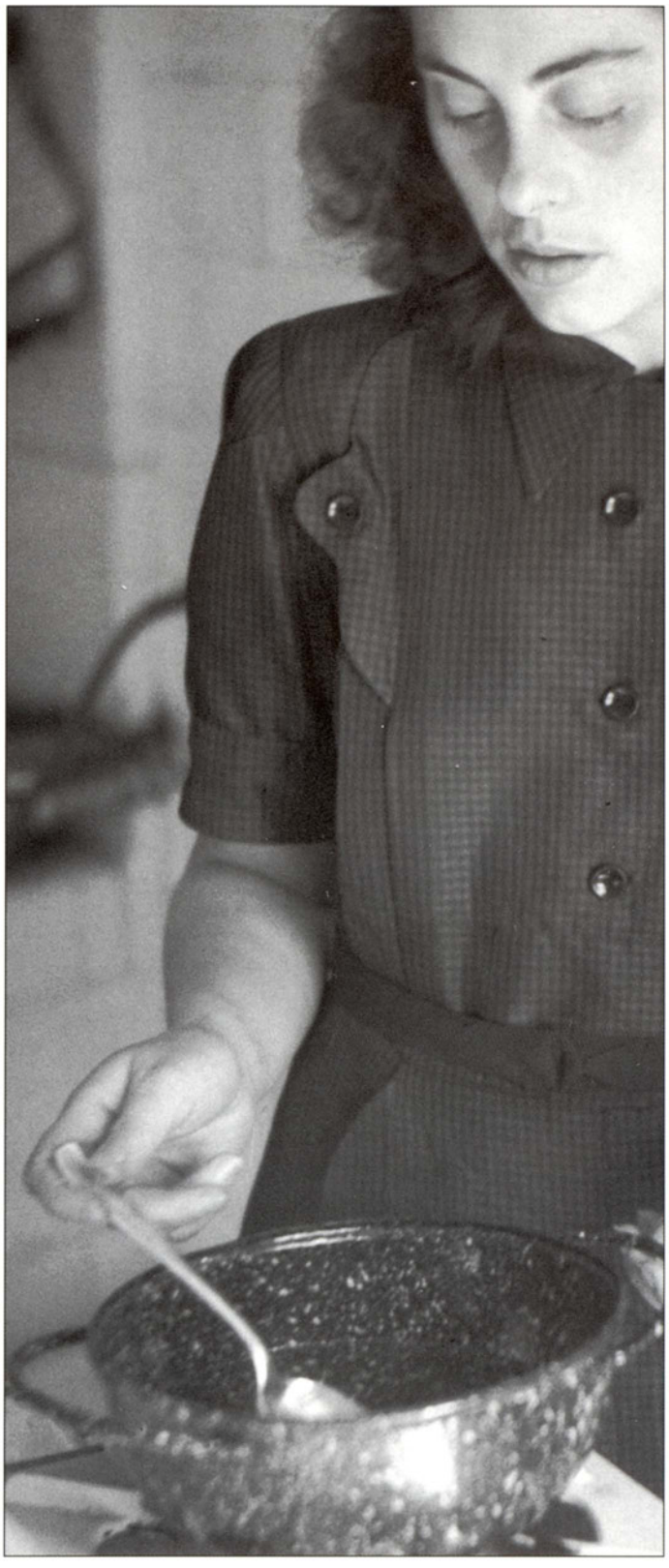
A paratroop NCO pictured during the Italian campaign. He wears a sand camouflaged M36 helmet converted to take the M38 liner and chinstrap system. Note the original round holes for attachment by split cotter pins and the slits punched out on the rim.

■ Waffen-SS armoured personnel during inspection. They are wearing what appear to be M40 helmets with SS runic shields on the right side (see page 291) and no transfer on the left, presumably conforming to the order of 1940 to remove the national and state shields. The paint finishes vary from smooth, through satin, to matte.

■ A Waffen-SS graveyard in the Soviet Union, possibly Orel, photographed in July 1941. Each grave is marked in typical Waffen-SS style with the Tyre rune and topped with smooth and satin painted apple green M35 helmets with twin and single SS insignia. Photographs like this, as well as those depicting piles of helmets, as seen on the next page, are the sort that makes a helmet collector's heart race.

■ The war has ended and an old man is selecting beaded Luftschutz M40s from a pile of discarded helmets. These will be used for conversion to cooking utensils for the housewife. (Collection of Imperial War Museum)

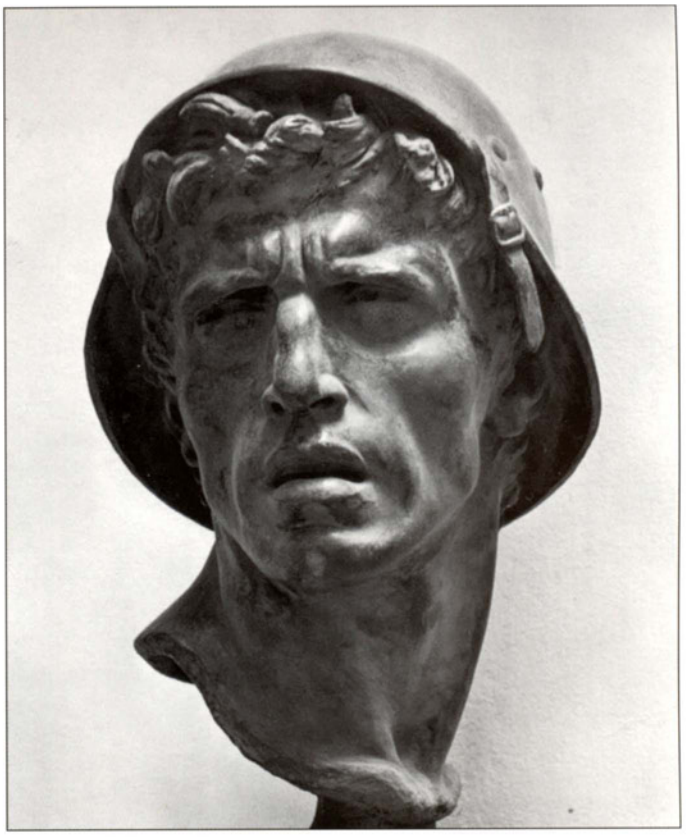




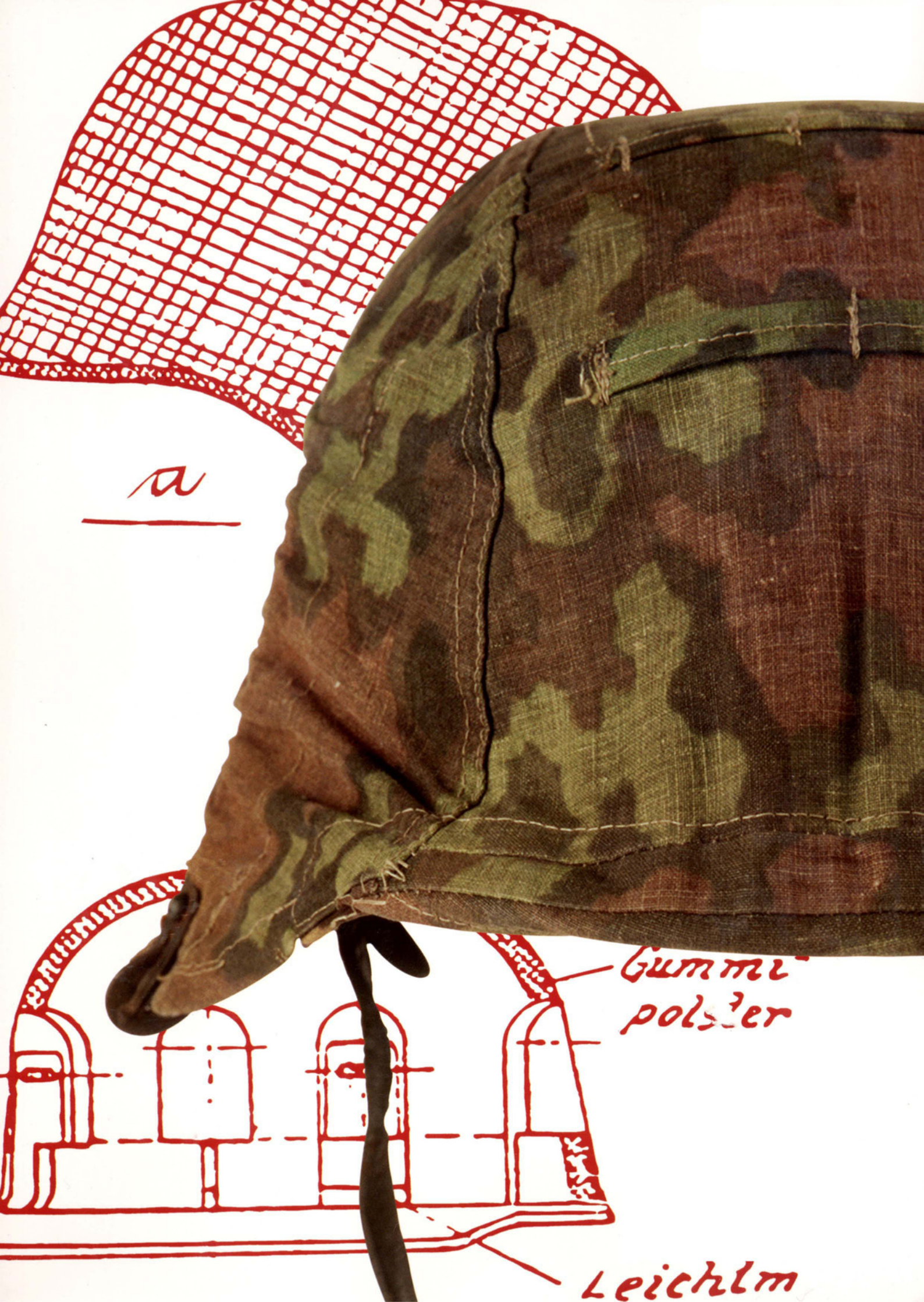
■ The rims are removed and are pressed into their new shape in preparation for the addition of handles and enameling. From swords into plough shares - the housewife prepares the meal. (Collection of Imperial War Museum)

IN ART

■ Various depictions of men and their helmets which appeared in paintings, sculpture, illustrated books and manuals, during the Third Reich era.



I/JR 50


a
Gummi
polster
Leichtm